

THE FUTURE TIMES

**BIBLICAL PROPHECIES ABOUT THE
REMAINDER OF HISTORY & BEYOND**



by Neal Fox

About the cover:

After human history is completed and the current universe has been destroyed, the New Jerusalem hovers above the new earth which has no oceans, with the light of God from the New Jerusalem illuminating the new universe as the only source of light during eternity.

“There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light...The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.” (Rev 22:5, 22-24)

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by Neal Fox

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INTRODUCTION

Prophecy concerning the future times is included as part of the Bible so believers in Jesus Christ can understand God's plan for history, know it is under His control, and live by faith trusting God. History will not play out in some random and uncontrolled way resulting in the earth and all mankind being destroyed. God has told us through His Word how human history will unfold so we can rest in the knowledge that His plan will proceed and conclude exactly as He has preordained. As believers we are on the winning side of history.

This book is a study of the future times, called eschatology, as revealed primarily in the book of Revelation and also in associated passages throughout the Bible. Note the use of “future times” instead of “end times” since the phrase “end times” for what Revelation reveals is generally inaccurate. Revelation tells us many things about the future of human history, including great judgments to come, but they will not result in some random calamitous ending to the earth and all mankind. Even though there will be a seven year Tribulation in the future which will be horrific, it is by no means the end of human history since it will be followed by 1000 years of perfect environment on the same earth. God's plan for His believers will never end, although human history will end. We believers have a wonderful eternal future beyond human history in a resurrection body living with our Lord in a new eternal universe and on a new earth far superior to the current one. So this study is about the future times, not about end times since there will be no end.

Regarding future judgments, all Church Age believers will be removed from the earth by the Rapture (resurrection) before the severe judgments of the Tribulation begin. We Church Age believers have no need to worry about being caught up in the struggles and disasters which will engulf the earth during those very difficult times. But Revelation is still important to both Church Age and Tribulation believers since one of the main issues regarding our faith is trusting God concerning future things, whether personal or historical. Revelation completed the Bible, so we have all the information necessary to understand the will and plan of God for our lives, and we who have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior may trust God knowing that the details are in His hands. With regard to how history will play out, we can live by faith knowing it is all under God's control. And if God can control the outcome of human history, He can even more easily solve our daily problems.

The Bible in general and Revelation in particular reveal how human history will play out, and what will become of all people in eternity. Every single person in all human history, and every single angel in all angelic history, will live forever. The issue is whether it will be with God or apart from Him. Human history will eventually end, but then the Eternal State will go on forever with all believers and elect angels residing with God, while all unbelievers, Satan, and fallen angels will reside apart from God in the Lake of Fire.

This study will begin with a brief overview of eschatology, or the study of future times as revealed in Biblical prophecies. This overview will provide a framework to help us understand specific prophecies along the way by viewing them in the overall context of where God's plan for the future is headed. After the future times overview, a study of the eschatology contained in Revelation and associated passages will fill in the details. Since Revelation chapters 1 - 3 contain no prophecies they will not be covered in detail, so we will focus on Revelation chapters 4 – 22 which reveal six parts to Biblical eschatology as outlined in the following section.

Chronology and Overview of the Future Times

- 1) Rapture of the Church: The next prophetic event in human history is the Rapture (resurrection) of the Church when all living believers will be removed from the earth apart from death and taken to Heaven in an eternal resurrection body. At the same time all Church Age believers who have previously died are given their resurrection bodies during the Rapture. This happens just before the Tribulation begins. There are no other prophecies which must be fulfilled during the Church Age, so the Rapture can occur at any time since it is the next prophetic event in God's plan for the future times. Once the Rapture occurs a 1,007 year clock starts ticking toward the end of human history on the current earth.
- 2) Tribulation: Immediately after the Rapture occurs the Tribulation begins, initiating a seven year period of concentrated judgments and disasters divided into two parts, each lasting 3 ½ years. The last 3 ½ years is called the Great Tribulation, which is the worst period of disaster, misery and divine judgment in all human history.
- 3) Second Advent of Christ: At the end of the Tribulation Jesus Christ returns to claim His rightful possession, the earth, at the Second Advent of Christ. He will destroy the armies of unbelievers at Armageddon and elsewhere, remove all other unbelievers who remain on earth, and put Satan and all fallen angels into jail until His Millennial reign is complete.
- 4) Millennium: Jesus Christ then implements the Millennial Kingdom on earth whereby He will reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years. There will be perfect environment on the current earth during this final stage of human history.
- 5) Human History Ends: After the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth is complete, Satan is released from the Abyss for his final judgment but attempts one last revolt on the earth. His revolt fails and he is thrown into the Lake of Fire along with all other fallen angels. The earth is vacated then it and the entire universe are destroyed. Both the angelic conflict and human history are complete at this point.
- 6) Eternal State: God creates a new heavens and new earth with a New Jerusalem hovering above the new earth. Eternity begins, and all believers live forever in resurrection bodies with Jesus Christ and the entire Trinity in this new eternal universe.

As this overview shows the future times will include a seven year period of great judgment and disasters on the earth during the Tribulation, however the following 1000 years of human history will be in perfect environment on the current earth. Afterward all believers will live eternally with the Lord. Again we see why the phrase “end times” is not an adequate description for what lies ahead in the future times, either during human history or beyond it.

The book of Revelation can be divided into two sections, and starts by revealing information about the remainder of the Church Age in chapters 1 – 3. But since these chapters do not reveal any prophecies, they are not part of a discussion of eschatology. The second part of Revelation in chapters 4 – 22 contains the eschatology portion which discusses the future times. This study will focus on the eschatology portion of Revelation contained in chapters 4 - 22 as a separate subject area. However, to briefly set the stage for the events of chapter 4, Revelation begins in chapter 1 with John on earth and the Lord Jesus Christ visiting him to provide information about the remainder of the current Church

Age, which is the subject of Revelation chapters 1 – 3. These three chapters cover the time period from 96 AD when the book was written until the Church Age ends with the Rapture (resurrection) of the Church just before the Tribulation begins. The information in these first three chapters outlines the types of issues facing believers during the Church Age by relating them to seven specific local churches on earth during John's time. This information focuses on issues associated with the spiritual life of Church Age believers and is not prophetic or sequential, so these first three chapters do not outline seven specific or separate time periods during the Church Age. This is consistent with the rest of the Bible whereby there is no prophecy associated with the Church Age except that it will end with the Rapture. The overall purpose of chapters 1 - 3 is to show how the Church will remain on earth for an extended and unspecified period of time until it is removed by the Rapture, which is covered at the beginning of Revelation 4. God has determined to keep the timing of the Rapture completely unknown, and since there is no prophecy which must be fulfilled during the Church Age prior to the Rapture any attempt to discover the timing of the Rapture using any method is futile. The structure and sequence of Revelation shows the Church will not go through the Tribulation, but instead will be removed before it begins. Until that happens, the Church has a mission to live the unique spiritual life God has given to it alone as a special category of believers blessed with the most powerful spiritual gifts God has given to any group of believers during any spiritual period of time (called in the Bible "Ages"). Therefore, since Revelation chapters 1 – 3 are not prophetic they are not included as part of this eschatology discussion.

With the final instructions to Church Age believers serving as background in chapters 1 – 3, Revelation chapter 4 proceeds with eschatology to reveal what will happen after the Church Age ends. The future times immediately following the Rapture will be a time of intense disaster, human misery and judgment lasting for seven years, followed by 1000 years of perfect environment on earth.

An issue which makes the book of Revelation somewhat difficult to understand is how the narrative goes back and forth, rather than using a straight timeline approach. Trying to view the events as linear, with one event following another, can lead to confusion. The format is generally a back and forth "vignette" approach which describes certain future events in preview form, followed by going backward to explain other related issues in detail, or show different views of the same event from Heaven and then from earth, often while introducing new related events into the scene. This back and forth approach does not provide for a smooth flow of events in historical order, so it requires a detailed study, not simply a reading. Of course there is a purpose to the format of Revelation. The point of the book is to provide the information we need, not to tell us everything which will satisfy our curiosity. Remember, we live by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). God does not tell us everything we want to know, only what we need to know. This is so we will trust Him for the details, and is also why trying to predict the timing of these future events is futile. God does not want us to know certain things, especially the timing of future events. Knowing enough about what is to come in the future times strengthens our faith, but knowing everything about the future would set aside faith.

With this overview in mind as a framework to help understand the specifics which are about to be covered, let us begin the study of Revelation chapters 4 – 22. All quotes from the Bible are New International Version (NIV).

OUTLINE OF REVELATION CHAPTERS 4 – 22

These chapters can be summarized as follows:

Chapter 4: The Rapture of the Church – John's Vision of Heaven

Chapter 5: The Book of Judgments

Chapter 6: The Tribulation Begins

Chapter 7: 144,000 Witnesses: Evangelism & Martyrdom

Chapter 8: Trumpet Judgments Begin

Chapter 9: Satan & Demons – Fury on the Earth

Chapter 10: The Angel & the Little Scroll

Chapter 11: The Two Witnesses

Chapter 12: The Woman and the Dragon

Chapter 13: The Two Beasts – Antichrist & False Prophet

Chapter 14: Evangelism During The Great Tribulation

Chapter 15: Preparations for the Bowl Judgments

Chapter 16: The Bowl Judgments Begin

Chapter 17: Babylon the Great

Chapter 18: Babylon Destroyed

Chapter 19: The Second Advent of Jesus Christ

Chapter 20: The Millennium & the End of Human History

Chapter 21: New Heavens, New Earth, New Jerusalem

Chapter 22: Encouragement to the Church

REVELATION CHAPTER 4

The Rapture of the Church – John's Vision of Heaven

Revelation chapter 4 begins the eschatology portion, the study of the future times. Revelation is written primarily to and for Church Age believers so we will understand the future times in enough detail to comprehend the plan God has for the remainder of time and also for the eternal state. It is also for believers during the Tribulation so they will understand that God has not abandoned them despite all the disasters and misery going on around them. And they will be very tempted to abandon their faith because of what they see happening. But God has provided enough information so all believers of all time can live by faith knowing He has a plan and that history is under His control. Chapter 4 starts with John being shown a scene in Heaven so the remainder of human history can begin to be revealed to him.

Rev 4:1 “After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

Jesus Christ speaks to John from Heaven. This verse says the voice of the Lord will sound “like a trumpet” saying “come up here”, as will happen when the Church is called off the earth to come up for resurrection at the end of the Church Age. The “door standing open in heaven” shows the Rapture (resurrection) of the Church has just occurred with the Church having entered through this open door in Heaven. The Apostle Paul revealed the “trumpet call of God” will be sounded at the Rapture when Jesus Christ takes the Church to Heaven, and He will give us a “loud command” calling the Church off the earth:

2 Thess 4:16 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, **with a loud command**, with the voice of the archangel and **with the trumpet call of God**, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

1 Cor 15:51 “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. **For the trumpet will sound**, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

The Rapture must occur before the Tribulation begins to comply with Rev 3:10 written to Church Age believers which says: “... I will also **keep you from the hour of trial** that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”

And as will be discussed later, all Church Age believers in resurrection bodies will return with Christ during the Second Advent at the end of the Tribulation, therefore the Church must first go up to Heaven in order to return from Heaven with Christ seven years later.

The first three chapters of Revelation dealt with the Church on earth during the Church Age, which is the time period from just after the Cross through the Rapture. Now that John is about to be shown the future times beyond the current Church Age, the Church is first removed from the picture. Indeed,

despite all the discussions about the churches on earth during the first three chapters of Revelation, the Church is not mentioned again as being on the earth until the summation in the last chapter of Revelation after the eschatology discussion has been concluded.

At the Rapture all living Church Age believers are removed from the earth apart from death and receive their eternal resurrection bodies in the earth's outer atmosphere. At the same time all Church Age believers who had previously died come out of Heaven to receive their resurrection bodies along with those living believers who were just called off the earth apart from death. Then the entire resurrected Church enters Heaven together with the Lord.

Note that the Rapture is not an “Advent” of Jesus Christ since He does not come down to earth, but only comes into the “air” (outer atmosphere) where all Church Age believers, alive and dead, will meet Him to receive their eternal resurrection bodies. The Rapture must not be confused with the Second Advent of Christ. The two events occur seven years apart, with the Rapture occurring just before the Tribulation begins, and the Second Advent occurring at the end of the Tribulation. At the Rapture Christ does not come to earth, but only into the outer atmosphere to provide all Church Age believers with an eternal body, then immediately returns to Heaven. At the Second Advent Christ comes to the earth to rule and remains for 1000 years. So the Rapture and Second Advent of Christ are two very different events.

The Church is the first group of believers to receive this eternal resurrection body, and until the Rapture occurs only Jesus Christ has a resurrection body. All Old Testament believers, although currently residing in Heaven, remain in a temporary body until they are resurrected just prior to the Second Advent. So the various resurrections of believers (collectively called the “First Resurrection”) occur in stages, starting with Church Age believers (Rapture of the Church), then Old Testament and dead Tribulation believers (just prior to the Second Advent), and finally Millennial believers (at the end of the Millennium). The “second resurrection” of all unbelievers of all time occurs as a single event after the end of the Millennium and is called the Great White Throne Judgment. Unbelievers are dealt with in two stages after death, first they are put temporarily in Torments (Hell) after they die, then after their final trial at the Great White Throne Judgment all are put into the eternal Lake of Fire.

At this point in the vision all Church Age believers have been removed from the earth leaving only unbelievers remaining as the seven year Tribulation begins. After the Church is removed by resurrection the Tribulation starts immediately and will last for seven years. The Tribulation is the completion of the Age of Israel which was interrupted by the Cross and does not involve the Church. Although not part of this study due to its complexities, a brief explanation of “Ages” is necessary to understand how the future times fit into God's overall plan. God has divided human history into four Ages which are:

- 1) Age of the Patriarchs: from Adam until Moses
- 2) Age of Israel Part I: from Moses to the Cross, then an interruption inserts the Church Age
- 3) Age of the Church: from the Cross until the Rapture
- 4) Age of Israel Part II: resumes and finishes during the seven year Tribulation
- 5) Millennium: the 1000 year reign of Christ completes human history.

We see there are four Ages, however they cover five separate periods of time since the Age of Israel is split into two separate parts, with the Church Age inserted between those two parts. The Tribulation will resume and finish the Age of Israel, since it was interrupted seven years short of completion when the Church Age was instituted after the Cross on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-3). It is important to understand that the Tribulation is part of the Age of Israel since this explains many things about events which will occur during that period of time.

So the study of the future times begins with the next prophetic event which will occur, namely the Rapture of the Church, which will initiate the seven year Tribulation, which will then be followed by the Millennium. But where does the Tribulation come from, and why is it necessary? Why such intense judgment and destruction before the perfect environment of the 1000 year Millennium? There are several components to this issue, and God has a good reason for including the Tribulation in His divine plan for the future times.

The first reason the Tribulation is necessary is because it will serve as the final battleground for the defeat of Satan. Satan's original coup attempt occurred long before the creation of man when he revolted against God and declared "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isa 14:14). Satan's fall resulted in a very long-running angelic conflict in which mankind plays a significant role, and it continues even now although Satan has already been judged guilty and sentenced to the Lake of Fire. This ancient angelic conflict comes to a head during the Tribulation, when Satan and his army of fallen angels (demons) will engage in frenzied activities aimed at trying to gain some advantage in this long-running but futile battle against God. Essentially, Satan is trying to avoid being thrown into the Lake of Fire which is his ultimate end, a judgment already pronounced by God but not yet carried out. In the meantime, Satan will use unbelieving mankind in the form of future world leaders (the Antichrist, False Prophet, and others) to help him attempt to achieve his evil goals. This futile quest will result in much disaster, misery, judgment and destruction on the earth during the Tribulation for mankind because of Satan's evil activities. Time is short for Satan, and he is out of options like a cornered animal who lashes out, and he uses unbelieving mankind to help him. So lacking any other viable options, Satan opts for destruction, violence and chaos as his game plan. It is not much of a plan, but it is all he has. He will focus on destroying Christians and Jews while also trying to destroy the earth itself, since achieving any of those would thwart God's plan to create a Millennial Kingdom as He has promised. The entirety of human history has been leading up to this final showdown. Acts 2: 34-35: "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." Jesus Christ is in Heaven at the right hand of the throne of God waiting until the end of the Tribulation when Satan will finally be defeated when Christ returns to earth. During the current Church Age God the Holy Spirit restrains Satan from engaging in the types of activities which will occur during the Tribulation. Since the Tribulation will be a resumption of the Age of Israel, the restraints by the Holy Spirit will be lifted and the frenzied satanic activities will be allowed for this short period of time, enabling Satan to make his final arguments as to why he should not be thrown into the Lake of Fire. The Tribulation is Satan's last stand. That is why the earth will suffer such destruction as Satan seeks to avoid his certain doom, and will use evil dictators to carry out his last desperate plans. Christ will return at the end of the Tribulation, imprison Satan and all fallen angels, and institute His Millennial Kingdom which will last for 1000 years.

At the same time mankind is at a peak of degeneracy and unbelief during the Tribulation. All believers will have been taken off the earth by the Rapture before the Tribulation begins, so the Tribulation starts with only unbelievers which allows evil to be spread more easily. The timing will be such that these

unbelievers will be in a cycle of extreme hardness of soul during one of the most degenerate periods of all human history. These unbelievers will be ready and willing to succumb to Satan's overtures and most will end up actually worshiping Satan through an idolatrous false religion set up by the Antichrist and False Prophet. As God always does, this widespread idolatry and satanic worship will be judged harshly, especially because it will severely persecute His believers.

This period of time will also be used by God to prepare the Jewish people for their future by returning them to His plan. The blindness which Jews have shown toward Jesus Christ will generally end when they see the Rapture has occurred, and they will believe in Jesus Christ in significant numbers which sets the stage for the Millennium when Jesus Christ will finally rule the earth from a regathered Israel for 1000 years. This is one of the very important reasons for the Tribulation, to prepare the Jews by turning them toward Jesus Christ paving the way for having large numbers of Jewish believers by the end of the Tribulation so they can populate the Millennial Kingdom.

So the intense judgment during the Tribulation is used by God to: 1) convince mankind, and Jews in particular, of the need for salvation to prepare the way for the Millennium, 2) judge unbelieving mankind for extreme degeneracy and evil which expresses itself in satanic worship, 3) fulfill prophecies from the Old Testament, and 4) serve as a final battleground for resolving the angelic conflict between Satan and God. Not wanting to spoil the ending, but Satan loses, the earth is turned into a paradise during the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, then after 1000 years eternity begins and believers live happily ever after with Christ and the entire Trinity. But there is much more to it than that.

The remainder of the story regarding the Tribulation revolves around a prophecy from the Old Testament which has not yet been fulfilled. God provided information through Daniel the prophet over 500 years before Jesus was born about the future of the Age of Israel in God's plan, including the coming Messiah and the Tribulation. Daniel prophesied how Israel would reject their Messiah, which would result in the Kingdom (Millennium) being postponed. This resulted in the interruption of the Age of Israel, although Daniel was not told the Church Age would be inserted. Daniel prophesied (Dan 9:24-27) that the Age of Israel would continue for "70 weeks" ("weeks" are 7 year periods of time, so $70 \times 7 = 490$ years) after the order was given to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. That decree was made by the Persian King Artaxerxes Longimanus in 444 BC. When the Age of Israel was interrupted just after the Cross, 69 "weeks" (483 years) had elapsed, which is seven years short of the 490 years prophesied by Daniel. Note there are conversions required from the ancient lunar year calendar used in the Old Testament to our present calendar (see Dr. Harold Hoehner's dissertation for more information on this issue). So the Jewish Age must resume in the future and continue for seven years in order to complete Daniel's prophecy. Daniel 9:24-27 [with added notes inside brackets] shows the sequence:

Dan 9:24 "Seventy 'sevens' [490 years] are decreed for your people [Israel] and your holy city [Jerusalem] to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place [to complete the Age of Israel in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom].²⁵ "Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out [decree of Artaxerxes] to restore and rebuild Jerusalem [after destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC] until the Anointed One, the ruler, [Messiah, Jesus Christ] comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' [69 "sevens", which is 483 years of the total 490 years promised, leaving 7 years remaining]."

Then Daniel goes on to talk about what will happen during the “70th week”, meaning the seven years of the Tribulation:

Dan 9:27 “He [the Antichrist] will confirm a covenant [treaty] with many [Israel] for one ‘seven’ [the 7 years of the Tribulation]. In the middle of the ‘seven’ he [Antichrist] will put an end to sacrifice and offering [breaks the treaty]. And at the temple he [Antichrist] will set up an abomination that causes desolation [idol of himself], until the end that is decreed is poured out on him [at Armageddon].”

As we see from Daniel, The Messiah was prophesied to come 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem. That literally happened on Palm Sunday, 33 AD, the week Jesus was crucified. Since Christ was rejected by the Jews as their Messiah, the Kingdom (Millennium) was delayed. Now God owes Israel 7 years (called Daniel's 70th Week) to fulfill the prophesy of the “seventy sevens.” That last seven years will be the Tribulation.

The current State of Israel has nothing to do with this prophesy since we are currently in the Church Age which must continue until it is completed after an unknowable period of time, so this issue is not about the presence of a Jewish state in the Middle East. We will discuss the miraculous regathering of all Jews into Israel later, which occurs after the Tribulation is completed, and sets up the Millennial Kingdom. The Tribulation is the last of these 70 “weeks” (each “week” a seven year period of time), so it will be the final seven years of the Age of Israel which is currently under suspension after 69 “weeks” because the Jews rejected their Messiah. Since God does not mix the Church Age with the Age of Israel, the Church cannot go through any part of the Tribulation and therefore must be removed by the Rapture before it begins. And the Church does not replace Israel or inherit Israel's covenants since the Church and Israel remain separate entities in God's plan throughout history.

Back to the narrative of Revelation, John now tells us what he sees after entering through the open door of Heaven as the Tribulation begins on the earth below.

Rev 4:2: “At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.”

The post-Rapture eschatology discussion begins with the Trinity. John is “in the Spirit”, both the filling of the Holy Spirit, and being a witness to future events and spiritual issues he is also in a temporary state of “spirit” which is a vision status. Whether these visions actually involved physical transport of John to Heaven outside of his body is not known. Most of what he would be shown was future, so these events were not occurring in Heaven at that time. But he literally saw and talked with the teaching angels involved, since he would make the mistake of falling down to worship two of them, for which he was scolded. Regardless of the method, John was provided details about the future times which he recorded to complete the Bible. Both the Apostle Paul (2 Cor 12:2-5) and Isaiah (Isa 6:1-4) recorded similar “spirit” visions of Heaven while still alive. Additionally, what John saw in Heaven needed to be partially shielded from him since “no man can see God and live” (Ex 33:20). Father and Son are both on the throne with the Son seated at the Right Hand of the Father since His ascension on the day of Pentecost (fifty days after the Cross). The Holy Spirit is there also, having removed His restraining ministry from the earth during the Tribulation, so the entire Trinity is in view. The Father is never visible to man until eternity, and the Holy Spirit does not take a form visible to man so is described in other terms. Jesus Christ as the God-Man is the only Member of the Trinity physically revealed to man. The throne in Heaven and what surrounds it shows authority, hierarchy, order and

protocol in Heaven, which contrary to the view of many these are required by God for both angels and man to have a relationship with Him, and is also necessary for man's happiness.

Rev 4:3 “And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.”

The One who sat there is Jesus Christ on His throne, the only member of the Trinity ever physically revealed to man. In this vision He is described as having the appearance of literally “a translucent stone and a red stone” or diamond and ruby. Although John knows what the resurrected Jesus Christ actually looks like, he describes instead what he is shown since the vision conveys symbolic meaning as a method of teaching John about the future times in terms he could understand and record. Precious gems are a sign of ruler ship and leadership, as with the high priests of Israel, and are also a symbol of perfection, highest value, and great beauty, so are used throughout this chapter to describe the Trinity. The point of showing the Throne of God as gem-like conveys the character of God. While too much can be made of the colors involved, generally the gems indicate in this context the diamond-like perfect Righteousness and the perfect Justice (red stone) of the One who performs judgment, Jesus Christ. These traits will be prominently on display during the Tribulation due to the judgments which are about to be revealed. The phrase “A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne” refers to the rainbow as God's sign of promise regarding man's continuation on earth, as with the rainbow after the Great Flood in Noah's time. This promise will be important to remember during the Tribulation because of the disastrous judgments on the earth which will cause great destruction. God does not have an “end times” in store for the earth during the Tribulation, just a time of greater judgment and cleansing. The current earth has a role far past the Tribulation, as we shall see later.

Rev. 4:4 “Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.”

Surrounding the throne of God are twenty-four Elders who are high ranking angels wearing golden crowns of victory. These crowns and high rank were earned before man was created, during an ancient time when only God and angels existed. At the point of this vision just after the Rapture no human in Heaven has yet received a crown. The first crowns go to Church Age believers, and that reward process for the Church occurs during the seven year period while the Tribulation is happening on the earth below. Old Testament believers in heaven receive rewards at the end of the Tribulation since the Age of Israel will not be completed until that time. So these are twenty-four angels, and the honors were earned during the early part of the angelic conflict which arose from Satan's revolt against God, when all angels chose sides, and 1/3 of them chose for Satan. Satan revolted against God long before man was put on the earth when he said:

“I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars [angels] of God.” (Isa 14:13)

Ezekiel also covers the fall of Satan due to arrogance:

Ez 28:12 “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘You [Satan] were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ¹⁴ You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. ¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. ¹⁶ Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. ¹⁷ Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.”

Satan and the other fallen angels battled God and His elect angels, and of course Satan's side lost. A trial occurred in Heaven, and Satan and all fallen angels were judged guilty and sentenced to the Lake of Fire before mankind ever existed. Apparently Satan objected to his punishment by saying an eternity in the Lake of Fire was unfair, and not what a loving God would do, leading to an appeal trial. As a result, man was created and placed on earth to resolve the issue of God's fairness. When man eventually sinned, following a similar pattern of Satan's sin, God provided salvation through Jesus Christ, proving God's love and fairness to unworthy mankind. Man's role is to accept the gracious gift of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ the Savior, showing Satan that God is not only perfect righteousness and justice, but also perfect love and completely fair. These combined traits can legitimately put Satan and all fallen angels into the Lake of Fire as punishment due to the finality of their rejection of God. This sentence will be carried out after human history has ended when Satan and all fallen angels go immediately into the Lake of Fire, showing how human history is tied directly to the angelic conflict. And unbelieving humans will also be put into the Lake of Fire since they joined Satan's side by rejecting God. In the meantime the ancient angelic conflict continues, with Satan attempting by any means to avoid his ultimate fate in the Lake of Fire which has already been decreed. And contrary to popular belief, Satan has never been to Hell, and he certainly does not rule over it. Hell (Torments) is a temporary holding cell for human unbelievers until they are judged at the end of history.

The twenty-four elect angels seen in this verse distinguished themselves long ago during the ancient angelic war and were given high rank (close proximity to the Throne of God) and rewards (wings, golden crowns and special clothing). Elect angels are in their eternal status now.

Rev. 4:5 “From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.”

God does not judge mankind without warning. Just as lightning and thunder warn of an approaching storm so all can seek cover, the lightning and thunder from the Throne of God are a sign of coming disaster on the earth providing mankind time to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior to avoid judgment. The gathering storm of judgments will certainly come, but deliverance is available. From the time of the Rapture until the Great Tribulation begins, 3 ½ years is provided during which time mankind can watch the approaching storm build and intensify and make a decision to change over to God's side. But most will ignore the warnings.

The seven burning torches are a sign of judgment as in Zech 12:6. In agricultural times burning torches were used to set chaff on fire after a wheat harvest. Chaff is used to denote unbelievers (Matt 3:12). The “seven spirits of God” shown as blazing torches are judgment angels which will carry out the decrees from the throne and execute judgments on the earth during the Tribulation. These judgments, as we will see, come in sevens as with the 7 Trumpet and 7 Bowl Judgments.

Rev. 4:6a “Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.”

The glassy sea resembling a crystal is the resurrected Church, having just preceded John through the open door in Heaven. Church Age believers are the only ones with resurrection bodies at this time, and their bodies are like the resurrection body of Jesus Christ (I Cor 15:49). Such a body has a translucent quality, which is shown in the crystal sea analogy. The Church will be united in Heaven with the Lord at the Rapture and will be at rest in resurrection bodies awaiting their rewards once the Tribulation begins, so will not go through the judgments which are about to occur on earth. Also, all Church Age believers will be evaluated during this time and rewards handed out, but this has not yet been accomplished since they just arrived. The Church is an entity which is separate from other believers from all other Ages, and its special status is shown by receiving the earliest resurrection.

This view of the glassy sea also shows that what John was “seeing” is not necessarily what Heaven literally looked like at that time, since the Church was not actually resurrected at the time of John's vision. His vision is primarily a representative version of Heaven intended for teaching purposes, since most events he was shown occur in the distant future.

Rev. 4:6b “In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.”

The “four living creatures” are four powerful angels surrounding the Throne of God. These are very high ranking angels known as Seraphs (Seraphim in the plural). They have six wings, denoting rank. Most angels do not have wings, only Seraphs (six wings) and Cherubs (four wings). There are very few such winged angels, and the vast majority, probably many millions of them, are wingless. This demonstrates hierarchy and order in Heaven, with angels organized by rank and function. Heaven is not a place where everyone is equal and all have wings and play harps and float around in a haze doing nothing in particular. Heaven has hierarchy, structure, and order and is also a place of great happiness.

Revelation emphasizes the role of angels during the future times since this will be the climax of the ancient angelic conflict which began when Satan revolted against God before man was even created. During the Tribulation man will be caught up in great devastation as Satan makes his final attempt to gain some level of advantage because he knows he is doomed. As the time for his final disposition in the Lake of Fire draws near, he will use the earth as his final battleground. Of course, he does not succeed. However, many people will suffer as a result of this conflict, and also as a result of their own rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior.

The four angels John saw had “eyes in front and back” showing they have great wisdom regarding God's plan and the judgments which will occur on earth, that is, they know God's truth. These four angels understand what is happening and why, and will be part of carrying out God's plan, including many intense judgments which the angels will administer on the earth as directed by the Lord. Once again this vision is not entirely literal in the sense that these angels do not have eyes all over their bodies. John is “seeing” representations of what is to come, and the visions communicate in terms John can understand, not necessarily in actual appearances of those involved. The angels see clearly the issues involved and are very wise, but are not covered with literal eyes.

Rev. 4:7 “The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.”

The faces of the four Seraphs in this vision mirror the One they worship, the resurrected Jesus Christ. Christ is ruler (lion), sacrificed for mankind (ox), true humanity as the God-Man (man), and protector of Israel (eagle). These four images are used in the Old Testament relating spiritual issues to Israel.

Rev 4: 8 “Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.”⁹ “Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,”

Jesus Christ is the focus of continuous angelic worship. This verse quotes and expands on Isa 6:3 “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Jesus Christ existed eternally as God, became the God-Man, and will be eternally the focus of worship by elect angels and saved mankind.

Rev. 4:10 “the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

The twenty-four high ranking angels worship Jesus Christ as Creator of all things Who also controls history. By His sacrifice on the Cross He earned the right to be the Judge of all things, which is why He is the focus in this introduction to the judgments which will occur during the Tribulation. The next chapter will continue this theme, describing Christ as the only one authorized to judge mankind. And since angels will administer the terrible judgments during the Tribulation, these angels are shown as approved by the Judge as having the wisdom to carry out the judgments.

REVELATION CHAPTER 5

The Book of Judgments

This chapter introduces the subject of the 7 Seals on the Book of Judgments and develops the issue of who is worthy to judge mankind in such a harsh manner during the Tribulation. Revelation has 7 Seals, 7 Bowls, and 7 Trumpets. The Seals are not specific judgments, but rather are broken open to reveal specific judgments including historical trends, Trumpets, and Bowls, just like unsealing a letter reveals its contents. Some Seals reveal historical trends which will be pervasive throughout the entire seven year period of the Tribulation, such as worldwide war and famine. Other Seals reveal specific judgments including Trumpet and Bowl Judgments which are revealed by opening the Seventh Seal. So the Seals are not specific judgments, but rather they are broken open to reveal judgments. The importance of this is that only Jesus Christ the Righteous Judge can open each Seal to allow each actual judgment to proceed. God does not casually judge mankind. God prefers to provide salvation and blessings to all mankind, but He respects the free will and choices which are made. However, those choices have consequences.

Rev. 5:1 “Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.”

God the Father holds the Book of Judgments scroll outlining the historical trends and judgments which must occur during the Tribulation. The book is sealed with 7 seals, meaning the judgments are withheld pending the final ruling on the matter by the Judge (Jesus Christ). A scroll written on both sides is very rare and usually indicates a legal document, in this case a series of judgments. Ezekiel was also given such a two-sided scroll of woe:

Ezekiel 2:9 “Then I looked, and I saw a hand [of the Lord] stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, ¹⁰ which he [the Lord] unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.”

Rev. 5:2 “And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”

The seals can only be broken by a qualified Judge. In all of mankind and angelic history no man or angel has earned the right to judge except for Jesus Christ.

Rev. 5:3 “But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ “I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. And I wept loud and continuously because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look upon it. ⁵ “Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Only Jesus Christ has earned the right to be Judge of all, and was delegated that authority by God the Father (John 5:22). Only Jesus Christ as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” can unleash the harsh judgments during the Tribulation, so He alone can open the Seals on the Book of Judgments.

Rev. 5:6 “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”

The one qualified to unseal the Book of Judgments is the one who earned the right to judge by being slain on the cross to provide salvation. He controls the “seven spirits of God”, meaning the seven judging angels, to execute the judgments He is about to order. Jesus Christ controls history, including all judgments on the earth. Again John sees a symbolic view of Jesus Christ. John saw the resurrected Christ on earth after the Cross, and before He ascended to heaven, so John knows what He actually looks like. Again this is a representational vision used for teaching.

Rev. 5:7 “He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.”

Jesus Christ takes the Book of Judgments from God the Father's right hand. He is deemed to be worthy to open the Seals and unleash the judgments on the earth.

Rev. 5:8 “And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people.”

The four Seraph angels worship Jesus Christ and hold bowls containing the prayers of the martyred Tribulation believers which will be discussed in detail during the 5th Seal in Rev 6:9.

Rev. 5:9 “And they sang a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

The Seraph angels sing a new song of praise for the One worthy to judge. This verse discusses that Jesus Christ ransomed many people from the earth by His work on the Cross, both Jews (tribes = Israel) and also gentiles (every language/people/nation). Believers from all the Ages of time who are victorious in their spiritual life will rule with Christ during the Millennium.

Rev. 5:11 “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.”

The numbers of elect (saved) angels is nearly countless. 10,000 times 10,000 equals 100 million but is an idiom for innumerable. They all focus on the Throne where Jesus Christ sits as Judge.

Rev. 5:12 “In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” ¹³ “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” ¹⁴ “The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.”

Again we see the angels praising Jesus Christ as the only worthy Judge. This chapter spends much time developing and discussing the issue due to the extreme severity of the coming judgments. The credentials of the Judge must be impeccable, and His judgments must be fairly apportioned. Remember that the history of mankind as part of the angelic conflict is about proving the fairness of God under many different conditions during several different Ages of time. These judgments, although extreme and devastating, will be completely fair.

With the fairness issue established and settled, the judgments are about to begin in earnest.

REVELATION CHAPTER 6

The Tribulation Begins

In this chapter Jesus Christ as the worthy Judge begins to break open the 7 Seals on the Book of Judgments. As mentioned previously, the Seals on the Book of Judgments are not specific judgments, but rather are opened to reveal judgments. The first several Seals reveal historical trends which will be pervasive throughout the entire seven year period of the Tribulation. So when we see the first few Seals opened to reveal war, famine, disease and so on these are issues which will occur in a very intense and sustained manner throughout the entirety of the Tribulation, not just at one specific point as with the Bowl and Trumpet judgments which will be unsealed later.

At this point it is worth examining why the Tribulation is a time of such extreme judgment on earth. Why all of this intense suffering, destruction, disaster, and mayhem during such a short period of time? The answer requires some background and goes back to the discussion briefly introduced earlier regarding the Ages of time. God divides human history into four periods of time called Ages. In each Age God gives mankind different conditions under which God can demonstrate His grace and fairness, starting with the Age of the Patriarchs, then Israel living under strict laws in the Old Testament during the Age of Israel, followed by a focus on the individual believer during the Church Age, then the intense adversity of the Tribulation which is a continuation of the Age of Israel, and finally the perfect environment of the Millennial Age. Each Age is used to prove certain points in the angelic conflict whereby mankind must choose for or against God's plan under varying conditions and rules set forth by God. God does not have one set of rules for all the Ages. Salvation is always the same, whether looking forward or backward to the Messiah Jesus Christ. But many other issues change as shown by the changes from the Old Testament to the New Testament. And the Millennium will have a new covenant provided directly from the Lord since He will be present on the earth as stated in Jeremiah 31:33 "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD." So also during the period of the Tribulation the rules are not the same as during the Church Age since it returns to a focus on Israel.

The Tribulation is a period where the Angelic Conflict is at its climax and the human population on earth is at a peak of hardness in unbelief. Demon activity will be at its highest levels during the Tribulation, adding to the mayhem and judgments on earth as demons enter into torturing individuals and deceiving nations in a manner not allowed at the current Age. As will be discussed later, a group of criminal demons currently held in a prison called the Abyss will be released, creating havoc on earth. At the same time, God will remove certain historical restraints on both man and demons, allowing them to take evil to greater extremes than has been allowed during the Church Age when God the Holy Spirit exercises significant restraint on such excesses of evil. These several factors together lead to an intense level of judgment on the earth, a level never before seen in all human history. But God's real purpose during the Tribulation is not simply judgment, but rather His grace uses that suffering to convince mankind, and especially Jews, to consider their unbelief in view of an eternity of even greater, unending suffering, so they might change their minds and put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

To summarize the purposes of the Tribulation, God allows maximum suffering on earth to accomplish His divine will in several areas:

- 1) Convince mankind in general of the need for salvation;
- 2) Break through the hardness of Jewish unbelief in particular so they will return to Him through faith in Christ as Savior, and enable the Millennial Kingdom to begin with many Jewish believers;
- 3) Protect Israel from destruction by Satan's forces and human armies;
- 4) Impose judgment on unbelievers for the martyrdom of believers during the Tribulation;
- 5) Defeat Satan and his demon forces as they fight a "last stand" against God and place them in prison awaiting final execution of their sentence to the Lake of Fire.

The 7 Seals on the Book of Judgments will now be broken open as the Tribulation begins immediately after the Rapture of the Church. The next seven years will be characterized by the adversities contained in the Book of Judgments described in the coming chapters. The first 4 Seals, which are the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", are announced by each of the four Living Creature Seraph angels which surround the throne of God.

The Seals

As the Lord opens the 1st Seal, the event is announced by one of the Seraph angels near the throne of God.

Rev. 6:1 "I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!"

Thunder in the distance warns of the coming storm. The gathering storm will be a set of extreme judgments on the earth, and the time for those judgments has arrived. The word "Come!" shows how the teaching angels take John away to view various representations of events as they will unfold.

Rev. 6:2 "I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest."

Seal #1 is the White Horse of dictatorship under the Antichrist who will strip mankind of their personal freedoms and force upon them a false religion which requires them to worship Satan. So-called "democratic" forms of government will be pushed aside and replaced by strong-armed dictators around the world. The strongest of them will be the Beast-Antichrist who will be discussed in more detail shortly. This man of Satan will appear early during the Tribulation and deceive the masses into giving up personal liberties in exchange for a promise of collective security under his dictatorship. The Antichrist will appear to be a leader on a white horse coming to the rescue, but instead he will be a force for great evil who enslaves millions of people. During the first half of the Tribulation he will not be seen as a force for evil, and will use cunning speeches and selective warfare to gain his position, and then will assume dictatorship rule over a ten nation confederation. The last sentence says "he conquers, so that he may conquer". The demon-possessed Beast-Antichrist conquers so Satan might gain power through him. So the white horse is dictatorship and loss of personal freedoms as a result of the Antichrist seizing power through conquest, which will continue and intensify throughout the entire Tribulation. There will be much more about the Beast-Antichrist in later chapters. Also recall that these first Seals reveal ongoing historical trend judgments, not point in time judgments. Once they begin, they continue throughout the entire Tribulation.

Now the Lord opens the 2nd Seal, announced by the second Seraph, the Fiery Red Horse of war.

Rev. 6:3 “When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.”

A different Seraph angel announces Seal #2. The Fiery Red Horse and its rider are four great armies which will engage in nearly constant worldwide war during the Tribulation, including the army of the Beast-Antichrist. Despots seeking power will take peace from the earth, meaning a continuous world war affecting the entire earth. The four spheres of power on the earth which we will see in detail later are the Kings of the North, South, East, and West, which will battle each other. The resulting wars will include conventional, guerrilla, terrorism, and even nuclear war. Again, the first several Seals are historical trends, not single point events. There will be specific battles during the Bowl and Trumpet judgments, but the Fiery Red Horse means a world war will start almost immediately and wage during the remainder of the Tribulation. The Rapture will lead to great instability among the nations and dictators will rush in to take advantage of the situation.

One of the very first wars during the Tribulation is described in Ezekiel Chapter 39 where the King of the North and his allies attack Israel. This is not the Armageddon campaign, which will take place nearly seven years later at the end of the Tribulation.

Ezekiel 39:2 “I will bring you [King of the North] from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel.³ Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand.⁴ On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals.⁵ You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.⁶ I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the LORD.⁷ I will make known my holy name among my people Israel.”

The timing of this Ezekiel 39 war results from the King of the North seeing an opportunity to attack Israel shortly after the Rapture causes massive disruption on the earth, especially among those nations supporting Israel. During the Ezekiel 39 battle the King of the North will be soundly defeated in the mountains of Israel as God Himself rains down fire from Heaven on the enemy army, which then retreats in defeat. There are several reasons this war must occur very early during the Tribulation. First, Israel will burn the weapons of the defeated army for fuel for seven years, which puts the battle at the very beginning of the Tribulation:

Ez 39:9 ““Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up—the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel.”

The inhabitants of Israel are given this extra fuel because the Tribulation will be a time of economic disaster, so the Jews in Israel will need the fuel and supplies for survival during that seven year period.

The second reason this war occurs during the early part of the Tribulation is because it is one of two miraculous events which will be used by God to cause Jews to lose their blindness toward Jesus Christ as Savior, resulting in many Jews being saved early in the Tribulation. The Rapture is the first event, as discussed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:25: "Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in". Then shortly after the Rapture the Ezekiel 39 war occurs and God gives Israel a miraculous deliverance from the huge army of the King of the North who attacks during the time of chaos caused by the Rapture. If not for this miraculous deliverance, Israel would be destroyed. When discussing this war Ezekiel 39:22 says: "From that day forward the people of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God." This shows how the divine deliverance from certain disaster changes the view of many Jews toward Jesus Christ, resulting in them becoming believers in large numbers. Recall that a main purpose of the Tribulation is to bring many Jews to salvation so they will go into the Millennial Kingdom. Then later in the same chapter Ezekiel 39:27 says: "When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations." Note the "When I have brought them back" describes the restoration of Israel as a future event which will occur seven years later at the end of the Tribulation, which further identifies the timing of this war. Furthermore, the Ezekiel 39 war cannot occur before the Rapture since no prophetic event can occur in the Church Age except for the Rapture itself, and this war is prophetic and has not yet occurred.

Additionally, God does not use the "fire from Heaven" approach during the Church Age, but He did use such an approach during the Jewish Age as noted in many Old Testament battles where God directly intervened on behalf of Israel. But during the Church Age God demonstrates His power and grace using more subtle means. Since the Tribulation will be a resumption of the Jewish Age, the miraculous "fire from Heaven" approach will be used once again. The King of the North will not understand this difference in Ages and will pay a terrible price, suffering a devastating loss of people and equipment which will keep him out of the political and military picture until late in the Tribulation when he attacks the King of the West.

All of this shows how the Ezekiel 39 war will be very early during the Tribulation, an issue which has confounded many who have sought to understand it.

Seal #2 revealed that the Tribulation will be a time of continuous worldwide warfare, starting with the Ezekiel 39 attack on Israel. Now the Lord opens the 3rd Seal, announced by the third Seraph.

Rev. 6:5 "When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand."

Economic depression and resultant famine is the Black Horse. As a result of the first two horses, the world spirals into worldwide depression. Scarcity and famine will grip the entire world for most of the Tribulation. The scales show how precious food becomes during this intense global economic depression. And a new dictator called the Beast-Antichrist comes onto the scene to parcel out food, goods, and services to his followers and withhold them from those who refuse to submit to him by taking the mark of the beast, as we will soon see.

Rev. 6:6 "Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

Jesus Christ is heard saying here that a day's wages will only buy a quart of wheat grains, or three quarts of barley grains, barely enough for a family to survive on lower quality food, and with nothing left over for anything else. And the olive oil and wine (luxury foods during a depression) will be highly sought after by those fortunate few who can afford them. Life is reduced to a subsistence level with people living hand to mouth worldwide.

Now the Lord opens the 4th Seal, the Pale Horse, announced by the fourth Seraph.

Rev. 6:7 “When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” 8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”

Death is the fourth horsemen, naturally resulting from the first three. Survival during the Tribulation is difficult, with the previous three horsemen causing death on a massive scale. A large part of the earth's population will die during these seven years from war, famine, wild animals, and increased illnesses, and many others will die from specific judgments during the Bowl and Trumpet judgments. The Pale Horse alone will take 25% of the earth's population, over 1.5 billion people. Then other judgments in the later Seals will kill even more people so that from the start of the Tribulation until the end it appears that more than 90% of the earth's population will die.

The 5th Seal introduces a different type of historical trend, which is persecution of believers, including martyrdom on a large scale. So the opening of this Seal is not a divine judgment, but a “false judgment” caused by man upon God's believers simply because of their faith. Remember that only Jesus Christ has earned the right to judge, so this usurpation of His role by unqualified mankind will result in judgment of the murderers later during the Tribulation. Man's inhumanity to man will reach a peak during the Tribulation. So much for the continuous improvement of mankind, which is a myth. Note also that the Seraphs have stopped announcing the Seals after the first four.

Rev. 6:9 “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.”

Believers who hold firm to their faith will be persecuted and often killed during the Tribulation. Those who refuse to worship the Beast-Antichrist are hunted down and become martyrs. Since the Rapture removed all believers before the Tribulation began, all these believers will be relatively new to their faith. That makes this an impressive display of faith by these believers during this time of great persecution. And that is the purpose for God allowing martyrdom for a while, to serve as a witness to a hardened world of unbelievers so some may turn to Christ and believe as a result of this intense form of testimony.

Rev. 6:10 “They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.”

The prayers of the martyrs are heard by the Lord, but they must be patient while God's plan plays out. Note that God has ordained that a “full number” of believers will be martyrs during the Tribulation, meaning a specific large number. As always, God has a time and manner decreed for the death of each of His own. But those who kill His believers will be severely judged. This persecution and killing of believers is one reason for the intensity of the disasters and judgments on the earth during this time, especially in the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments as will be noted later.

Opening the 6th Seal reveals massive earthquakes, enormous tidal waves/tsunamis and explosive volcanoes on a regular basis. This disruption of normal earthly events and processes will continue at intense levels throughout the entire Tribulation.

Rev. 6:12 “I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,”

Soot from the earthquakes and resulting volcanoes will blacken the sky and hide the sun during the day and turn the moon red by night. Visibility will be greatly reduced. Airline travel will become nearly impossible in the thick ash. Everything will be coated with ash and will require constant cleaning, but will never stay clean. Constant irritation will be the companion of people on earth as they struggle to simply survive in the dust and ash-filled air. The beauty of the earth is stripped away as everything becomes covered by ash and dust. People must wear masks as they go about on daily tasks. Life is getting difficult, but it will get much worse.

Rev. 6:13 “and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.”

Large meteors falling to earth will become a routine event. Life on earth will become shortened for many as with a fig tree shaken hard and its unripe fruit falling too early to be of any value (unbelievers with no salvation).

Rev. 6:14 “The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.”

Two issues are discussed here. First, the atmosphere being rolled up suggests nuclear warfare, and secondly there will be massive earthquakes which will shift the tectonic plates of the earth on a larger scale than ever before in the history of the earth. The landscape will change as a result. All island dwellers will die.

Rev. 6:15 “Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.”

No amount of human power, fame, fortune, or lack thereof will shield people from these disasters. There is no hiding in fallout shelters or elsewhere which can avoid these disasters. The great and small alike will suffer and die. But in general they will still refuse to look to God for their salvation. Instead, they pray to rocks:

Rev. 6:16 “They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”

This shows the degree of hardness of these unbelievers. They will understand that God is judging

them, but will still refuse to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. They will not pray to God but will pray to rocks to spare them from God, and to bring them death and oblivion. But even if they die, there is no oblivion. Their eternal future will be even worse.

Rev. 6:17 “For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”

The disasters will break the will of unbelievers, but even so most refuse to become believers. The last verse of Chapter 6 asks “who can withstand it?” The answer is only believers with an understanding of Biblical doctrines in their souls can stand in the face of what is happening, and what is yet to come. Only believers can stand since they know their future in Heaven is secure, and their life on earth is in God's hands. This verse also looks forward to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, the “great day of their wrath” when believers will be delivered and all unbelievers will be removed from the earth. And as difficult as the first half of the Tribulation will be as a result of these six Seals being opened, the last half will be much worse.

The first six Seals have now been opened. They will be opened starting early during the Tribulation with the Four Horsemen and the effects will continue throughout the seven year period, so it seems all six Seals are opened during the first 3 ½ years. The Seventh Seal is the big one with numerous sub-components, including 7 Trumpet and 7 Bowl Judgments, which will take some time to carry out. So it is likely the Seventh Seal is opened after the mid-point of the Tribulation.

But before John deals with the Seventh Seal, a parenthesis is inserted to explain some important issues related to God's grace during times of judgment. This parenthesis goes back to the beginning of the Tribulation just after the Rapture. So although the first six Seals would have been opened during the first half of the Tribulation, John now takes a look back before any of the Seals were opened. This is why Revelation requires careful analysis since it is not a linear discussion of events. Be patient, because this back and forth will continue throughout the remainder of the Book. There is much to learn from these parentheses.

REVELATION CHAPTER 7

The 144,000 Witnesses

Chapter 7 is a parenthesis which interrupts the discussion of the Book of Judgments and the breaking of the Seals on that Book. Before the 7th Seal is broken John must first be shown the grace of God during these judgments, namely the evangelization of the world. So a parenthesis is now inserted between the 6th and 7th Seals to explain that although Jesus Christ has authorized the greatest of judgments on the earth, He still desires salvation for all and ensures maximum evangelization before the final and most disastrous judgments occur. God always provides grace before judgment, so during the early part of the Tribulation God establishes a new system of evangelism since all believers will have been taken away at the Rapture. Now we take a look back to the beginning of the Tribulation to show the grace of God in providing evangelism before any of the disasters and judgments began. The Rapture caused many to change their minds and seek the salvation God has offered through Jesus Christ, especially Jews who were shaken out of their unbelief by both the Rapture and the Ezekiel 39 war. This parenthesis shows how God provides every chance for salvation for those who are willing to listen. This new wave of evangelism for a world made up of only unbelievers is established immediately after the Rapture to give mankind time to accept Jesus Christ as Savior before the most severe divine judgments begin during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.

Rev 7:1 “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” ⁴ Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.”

As we saw previously, the first six Seals reveal disasters which include intense weather conditions on the earth. Scorching sun, wind, hail, tornadoes, hurricanes, lack of rain, too much rain, and so on will cause tremendous hardships. Both personal and economic disaster will be the norm during the Tribulation. God uses His elect angels to control the weather patterns of the earth, and these angels will be especially active during the Tribulation. There are four weather angels stationed in the north, south, east, and west portions of the globe, and during the Tribulation they will be given authority to cause great destruction on the earth. But before these disasters are allowed to proceed, God provides a period of grace before judgment in the form of worldwide evangelization, which is why the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation will have the Four Horsemen and other disasters but is not nearly as bad as the last 3 ½ years.

When the Rapture takes all believers off the earth, no qualified evangelists remain. Therefore God raises up a new cadre of evangelists at the beginning of the Tribulation, which are the 144,000 witnesses from Israel. The 144,000 are Jews who believe in Christ as soon as they see the Rapture, since they will immediately grasp its significance and understand what it means. The Rapture causes a great awakening on the earth among the Jews. Almost immediately after the Rapture the 144,000 Jews believe in Jesus Christ and become the initial evangelists for the early part of the Tribulation. Therefore the elect angels in charge of the weather judgments are told to hold off on disasters until evangelism gets established since God wants to offer every chance for salvation. These new evangelists will have “the seal of the living God” which means they are given special divine protection.

The Holy Spirit will have departed from the earth, and since His sealing ministry is gone, a new form of divine sealing is given to these 144,000 evangelists. The great weather disasters will not begin until these 144,000 are in place and sealed, and the evangelization of the world has begun.

The end of the Church Age will result in restarting the Age of Israel, also called the Jewish Age, which had paused just after the cross. The Jewish Age lasted over two millennia from the time the Jews departed Egypt for the Promised Land until shortly after the cross when it was interrupted. So it is necessary that the Jews become the evangelists once again during the Tribulation, just as during the earlier part of the Jewish Age, since the Tribulation is the final seven years of that Age. As a reminder, the Jewish Age was cut short by seven years, so God owes the Jews that seven years as discussed in Daniel 9:24-26 (Daniel's 70th Week). Just as the Jews were the evangelists during the earlier Jewish Age, they will once again become the evangelists during the Tribulation, which will resume and conclude the Jewish Age. However, Israel will not be focused as a nation set apart to God as it was during the Jewish Age, since it will not yet be regathered by Jesus Christ. The miraculous regathering of Israel will occur just before the start of the Millennium. The Jewish nation during the Tribulation will be generally apostate and ruled by an evil dictator who supports the false religion of the Beast-Antichrist, so it will not be a spiritual nation under God during that time. However many of those who live in that Jewish nation will become believers and therefore will be evangelists to the world.

John now describes how these 144,000 evangelists will come from the Jewish tribes in equal proportions, except one tribe will be omitted.

Rev 7: 5 “From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, ⁶ from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, ⁷ from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, ⁸ from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.”

The 144,000 evangelists are represented equally from the Jewish tribes listed. The Bible often lists the tribes differently depending on what spiritual lessons are being taught. There were twelve sons of Jacob, but Jacob's son Joseph had special status among the twelve, so Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh are often listed instead of Joseph himself. This makes for fourteen possible ways to refer to the tribes of Israel, namely the twelve sons of Jacob plus the two sons of Joseph, referred to as Joseph's double portion. In this passage the tribe of Dan is omitted since the False Prophet will come from Dan, and Dan was also the original source of idolatry in Israel with the Golden Calf incident while the Ten Commandments were being given to Moses. Therefore Joseph is used here in place of Dan. Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh are often listed instead of Joseph himself, however Manasseh is listed here but Joseph's other son Ephraim is not.

The “sealing” of these evangelists is divine protection, and they will survive all attempts to stop their message. Notice the Tribulation becomes somewhat like the Old Testament times since it is a resumption of the bifurcated Jewish Age which was paused shortly after the Cross. But although the Tribulation will resume the Jewish Age, the Cross has occurred so many things are changed. The Tribulation will be a hybrid of the Jewish Age mixed with post-crucifixion doctrines. In other words, since Christ the Messiah has been presented on earth, believers of the resumed Jewish Age generally have post-crucifixion doctrines to live by. As such, animal sacrifices are no longer an authorized form of worship, even though the apostate Jewish unbelievers will resume offering animal sacrifices in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

Now the parenthesis switches scenes to view the results of the evangelization by the 144,000 during the early part of the Tribulation, when mixed with a hardened world of unbelievers who engage in a false religion. That result is many martyred believers.

Tribulation Martyrs Seen in Heaven

Rev 7:9 “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

These will be revealed a couple verses later as martyred believers from the Tribulation. Evangelization early during the Tribulation just after the Rapture will yield much fruit, and many believe in Jesus Christ because of the shocking nature of the Rapture. The Rapture especially causes Jews to believe in Jesus Christ in large numbers worldwide. But during the middle years of the Tribulation after the Beast-Antichrist is revealed there is great repression and persecution of those believers, and many will die after refusing to renounce their faith and refusing to take the mark of the Beast, so they are deprived of food and necessities. Many martyred souls from all nations, races, social status, and languages are shown here to John in Heaven before the throne of the Father and Son. The palm branches symbolize the Feast of Tabernacles (Ps 118:27) which symbolizes the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. These martyred believers look forward to the Millennial rule of Christ on earth where they will have a special place in His Kingdom.

The great multitude seen in this verse are those believers who were killed during the Tribulation because of their faith in Jesus Christ. The timing here is past the mid-point of the Tribulation up to the point where the Trumpet Judgments are about to begin during the last couple years (remember we are in a parenthesis here, so the timing is not linear). Even though these were new believers who accepted Christ after the Rapture just a few years before their martyrdom, they were strong in their faith. God has special provisions in Heaven and during the Millennium for them, as we will see.

Rev 7:11 “All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

The angels in Heaven give thanks for God's grace in evangelizing the world before He executes the most severe judgments. The angels also rejoice over these Tribulation martyrs who demonstrated a victorious witness on earth by being faithful unto death. But John did not recognize who they were, and needed to be told by an angel. The angel initiates the discussion with John:

Rev 7:13 “Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” ^{14a} I answered, “Sir, you know.”

A high ranking angel asks John a rhetorical question, then provides the answer. This senior ranking angel uses an unusual teaching method here and asks John a question which he knows John will not be able to answer, then he tells John the answer. These Tribulation martyrs were shown to be faithful even to the point of death instead of submitting to the false religion of the Beast-Antichrist, as the angel

describes:

Rev 7:14b “And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.”

In the presence of God the Father there is nothing negative. The martyrs are in the throne room of Heaven before the Trinity where they have special provisions and status. The terrible things they endured on earth are contrasted with the wonderful provisions from God for this special group of believers. They endured for a short while, and then they have eternal happiness. Note that the angel says they came out of the “Great Tribulation”. This term is only used for the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. Again we see the non-linear approach to the writing of this Book, since Revelation has not yet discussed the last 3 ½ years.

As this passage shows, believers will be killed in large numbers during the Tribulation simply because they are believers in Jesus Christ. The world will have unquenchable hatred for believers like no other time in history. The Lord discussed this with His disciples:

Matthew 24:4 “Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

When Jesus said “you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death” and “many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other” and “the love of most will grow cold” it shows how desperate the times will be for believers. During the Tribulation many believers will lose faith and question why God would allow such evil to exist. These believers must realize they have been chosen to convey the message of salvation in this way to a truly wicked generation of hardened unbelievers, and only their martyrdom can break through and bring some of those lost souls to salvation. Then Jesus adds “but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved”, meaning delivered into the Millennial Kingdom alive to live 1000 years in perfect environment under the rule of Jesus Christ. But for those who die as martyrs, there is comfort and eternal rewards:

Rev 7:16 ““Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

The Tribulation martyrs died from deprivation on earth because of their faith, but now the Father makes up for all of it, and they will suffer no more. They are in Heaven and beyond the reach of any further trouble which is coming to the earth. In the midst of the horror of their death the reassurance of eternal happiness is given. But for those who sent them to heaven, the greatest of judgments awaits. God may be slow to anger, but at some point He judges. The blood of the martyrs will be avenged. Now that worldwide evangelization has been accomplished, this chapter 7 parenthesis which dealt with God's grace providing worldwide evangelization is now complete.

The Seventh Seal is about to be opened, and it will reveal seven Trumpet Judgments followed by seven Bowl Judgments. This is the start of what Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:21: "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."

The first several Seals revealed disastrous historical trends which will be pervasive through the entire seven year period of the Tribulation. We have seen Seals opened to reveal dictatorship, war, famine, death, martyrdom, and natural disasters which will occur in an intense manner throughout the entirety of the Tribulation, not at one specific point as with the Bowl and Trumpet judgments which will now be discussed. The intensity is about to be ratcheted up significantly, especially on those who martyred the Lord's believers. The Seventh Seal contains fourteen severe judgments which will be shocking in their impact, and that is exactly the point God has in mind.

REVELATION CHAPTER 8

Trumpet Judgments Begin

With the parenthesis showing grace before judgment now closed, John returns to the Seals where he left off after the sixth Seal was opened at the end of chapter 6. Remember the Seals on the Book of Judgments are not specific judgments, but rather are opened to reveal judgments. Up to this point the first four Seals revealed the Four Horsemen judgments, followed by Seal five which revealed persecution of believers, then Seal 6 revealed several forms of devastating natural disasters. Now Seal #7 will reveal supernatural divine judgments in the form of seven Trumpets and seven Bowls, so fourteen separate judgments come out of Seal #7. This Seal is a super Seal which releases a multitude of judgments like the culmination of a fireworks display.

It should be noted that the early part of the Tribulation is mostly mankind making its own disasters (war, famine, depression, etc) which will be severe even though largely self-induced. But after several years the grace period is over, and the second half of the Tribulation becomes the worst period of human suffering ever. God is about to judge mankind in a way that has never been seen on the earth since the Great Flood of Noah's time.

Rev 8:1: "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."

The horror of the Seventh Seal being opened and the looming seven Trumpet Judgments and seven Bowl Judgments is cause for a solemn pause. The angels in Heaven stand silent in anticipation – this will be terrible to witness. And since the angels will have a large role in administering these judgments, they are well aware that what lies ahead will create horrendous suffering on the earth. Heaven is a busy place with much rejoicing and praising God, so silence is not the norm. But with the approaching severe divine judgments Heaven becomes silent in anticipation of what is about to occur. God has offered His grace which was mostly refused. Now comes judgment because of the martyrdom of believers, and it will be shocking to those on the earth in its intensity, form, and effects.

Regarding the timing of the Seventh Seal, the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments occur late in the Tribulation, likely during the last couple years. Rev 6:10-11 compared to Rev 7:14 shows the Trumpets and Bowls are revenge for the deaths of the martyrs "who have come out of the great Tribulation", which is the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. Also, the number of martyrs were said to be "a great multitude that no one could count" in Rev 7:9, also showing these Trumpet Judgments occur late in the seven year period due to the very large number of martyrs. The bulk of the martyrdom will begin just after the middle of the Tribulation when the Beast-Antichrist begins his rule over the ten-nation confederation, so these Trumpet Judgments are necessarily late in the seven year period, with the Bowl Judgments following them at the very end. Also, the severity is such that these judgments would need to be late in the Tribulation due to the massive destruction or else no one would survive to the end. Once the Trumpets start they are consecutive, and the Bowls are not far behind.

Rev 8:2 "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them."

We have seen how angels dispense many of the judgments of God. The Trumpet Judgments are actual judgments revealed and released by the Seventh Seal. With that Seventh Seal now opened, seven Trumpet judgments, worse than any judgments before them, are about to be unleashed in rapid succession.

It is useful to remember at this point why God is about to judge mankind and the earth in such a severe way. After all, the historical record of the world is one of people generally rejecting God and salvation, with only relatively brief periods which have been the exception. There are two reasons for these fourteen severe divine judgments called Trumpets and Bowls. The first is the extreme persecution and martyrdom of many believers during the Tribulation. These believers will be martyred by the unbelieving world simply because they were believers and refused to submit to the satanic world religion headed by the Beast-Antichrist. Those who refuse the mark of the Beast will be put to death for their refusal, or else die slowly of starvation since they cannot buy or sell anything, as we will see in the coming chapters. These martyrs will have prayed many prayers, before and after their death, and God's answer to the prayers will be to severely judge those responsible. The Trumpet and Bowl judgments are not God venting His anger due to the world's unbelief. That has been the norm over long periods of human history. These judgments have a specific reason, which is to avenge the deaths of the Tribulation believers who will be martyred in the name of Jesus Christ. Given the short time they will have been believers, their deaths will be an amazing witness to a world filled with hate and darkness of soul.

The second reason for these severe judgments is the angelic conflict which reaches a crescendo of activity as Satan realizes his doom is very near. For thousands of years God has given Satan the opportunity to prove why he should not be put into the Lake of Fire for all eternity. Satan has tried many things to thwart God's plan, and all have failed. During the Tribulation Satan is at the end of his options, and lashes out in fury. This mixture of God's judgments and Satan's fury makes for severe disasters on the earth.

Rev 8:3 “Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand.”

The Golden Alter of Incense in the Jewish temple was where the priests burned incense, which represented prayers going up to Heaven. As we noted earlier, the prayers of the Tribulation martyrs for retribution on their tormentors becomes the basis for the Trumpet judgments. A warning is now sent to earth announcing the beginning of these great judgments.

Rev 8:5 “Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”

The Trumpet judgments start with an angel sending down a final warning. Again we see the use of thunder and lightning as a warning of the approaching storm of judgment. And an earthquake is thrown in for enhanced effect. Thunder, rumblings, and lightning in the distance are all warnings of the coming storm, and here we have the rapidly approaching “storm” of great disasters. This reminds the world there is still time for unbelievers to change their minds and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, but time is getting very short.

Overview of the Trumpet Judgments:

- 1) the Trumpet Judgments are divinely caused, literal and real -- not allegory, not symbolic, but real, even though they may sound like science fiction
- 2) the first four Trumpet Judgments are against nature
- 3) the last three Trumpet Judgments target unbelieving mankind directly, especially those who persecuted the martyred believers
- 4) the Trumpet Judgments contain the “Three Woes”, which are another name for the last three Trumpet Judgments which involve demon torturing of unbelievers and are especially intense and gruesome
- 5) the Trumpet Judgments are sequential with only short pauses between them
- 6) the Trumpet Judgments target unbelievers, and God spares most believers, although the effects will be widespread
- 7) when the Trumpet Judgments are over, large numbers of the unbelieving population of the earth will have been killed, along with some believers who abandoned their faith.

Rev 8:6 “Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.”

As we have seen, the anticipation and build-up to the start of the Trumpet Judgments shows the intensity has been ratcheted up significantly. The first Trumpet Judgment now begins, and is against the vegetation of the earth.

Rev 8:7 “The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.”

Trumpet Judgment #1 is wind shear velocity (“hurled”) fiery hail mixed with blood rain. Remember, this is literal, not an allegory. The angels are given authority to destroy 100% of all grasses and a third of all non-grass vegetation on the earth. God takes away the majority of the world's food supply by killing off all grasses, including wheat, rice, and other grains which are the world's chief sources of food. And since the world's livestock depends on what has been destroyed in the judgment, the meat supply will also be largely taken away as a source of food. The resulting worldwide famine will be severe. The oxygen and carbon dioxide cycle mediated by trees and other vegetation will be disrupted resulting in reduced oxygen supply. There will be little timber left for building. The earth will become scarred and ugly, and little beauty will remain. This is truly a “scorched earth” as described in Joel:

Joel 1:10 “The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up; the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the olive oil fails. ¹¹ Despair, you farmers, wail, you vine growers; grieve for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field is destroyed.”

This judgment is accomplished in a supernatural way, as all Trumpets and Bowls will be, with fiery hail mixed with blood, which is a reminder of why this is being done. The blood of the martyrs is being avenged. So you unbelievers enjoy blood? Here's some blood for you. The rotting blood and stench will be overwhelming, and disease will increase exponentially as a result.

Note that the divine judgments are literal, real, specific, and certain to occur. This cannot be overemphasized. These are not metaphors or allegory or representational analogies. They are not explainable in scientific terms as naturally occurring events. They are judgments from God and administered by angels, and therefore are clearly divinely delivered so all on the earth can understand the true Source of these judgments. But even so, few will believe.

Rev 8:8 “The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, 9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.”

The second Trumpet Judgment is against the oceans and seas (salt water) of the earth. God takes away a large portion of another major food source, which is seafood. A third of all sea life is destroyed. The oceans are polluted with the rotting sea creatures mixed with blood thrown down, once again reminding that this is judgment for killing God's believers. But even the image of a mountain of fire and blood coming down from heaven into the ocean will not change the minds of the hardened unbelieving world.

This second Trumpet Judgment targets the oceans and salt water seas which together cover about 70% of the earth's surface and account for about 96% of the earth's water. There must be no attempt to try to explain these judgments as an accident such as a random meteor or asteroid. An angel will literally throw a huge burning mass the size of a large mountain into the earth's oceans. Remember this is divinely caused, literal and real -- not allegory, not symbolic, but real. Ps 105:29 says: “He turned their waters into blood, causing their fish to die.” A third of the oceans and seas are turned to blood, and all creatures in those affected regions die. Overall a third of all sea creatures die. A third of all shipping is destroyed. This destruction of so much sea life and many ocean-going vessels, on top of the destruction of a third of all vegetation on earth including 100% of grain plants, quickly squeezes the food supply to the brink, and starvation accelerates. The rotting flesh of sea creatures and blood will create a worldwide stench and will further accelerate diseases. The earth does not have time to react to one disaster before the next one hits. The cumulative build-up of disaster upon disaster maximizes the intensity of the suffering.

It is worth comparing what is happening on earth at this time during the Tribulation to what happened when Moses warned the Pharaoh of Egypt to set the people of Israel free from slavery. Moses warned and warned, then a terrible judgment would occur, but Pharaoh refused to change his mind. Then the process repeated. There were 10 plagues against Egypt, and Pharaoh showed a degree of hardness of heart which will now be equaled by unbelievers during the Tribulation. Also note the correlation of the actual Trumpet Judgments to the judgments against the Pharaoh of Egypt. The Egyptian judgments included blood, hail and fire, darkness, killing livestock, rotting flesh of wildlife, pain, unusual things falling from the atmosphere, and so on. The judgments are also similar since they caused intense suffering on a grand scale for the Egyptians, but not for the Jews, and in the same way God will take care of His own during the Tribulation. Even though the entire world will suffer hardship, the unbelievers are specifically targeted and the believers are generally delivered even though the times will be extremely difficult for all. But those believers who depart from their faith and take the mark of

the Beast will not be protected. More on that issue later.

Rev 8:10 “The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— ¹¹ the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.”

The third Trumpet Judgment is against the fresh drinking water of the earth in lakes, rivers and reservoirs. An angel throws a massive burning ball of bitter tasting poison into the fresh waters of the earth, breaking up and landing in numerous regions, then spreading out from there. It will be made of a bitter poison compared to the taste of wormwood, although wormwood is not itself a poison. The poison is unknown to earth and there is no antidote. The poison will spread out causing 1/3 of all fresh water to be poisoned, resulting in many deaths from both poison and lack of drinking water. The ball of fire is not an actual star, but looked like one to John. Again, these are literal, but since they are not naturally occurring events they must be compared to what John knows. These are divinely caused, literal and real -- not allegory, not symbolic, but real. Those who try to drink the tainted water die. At this point there is very little food and now little drinking water available on the earth. People are reduced to bare survival levels and extreme misery. With very little fresh water to drink, the earth's unbelievers are not just starving, they are dehydrating to death. Believers suffer, but God does not neglect His own, so most will survive unless they take the mark of the Beast.

Rev 8:12 “The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.”

The fourth Trumpet Judgment is a supernatural judgment against light on the earth, and the image of it leaves John struggling to explain what it looks like. A third of the sun becomes dark so that it shines less time on the earth. This is something which must be seen to understand, but it will be literal. A third of the moon (beyond just moon phases) becomes dark, and a third of the stars stop shining. People on the earth at this point are just trying to survive, and now will have shortened opportunity to do so due to the increased darkness. This Trumpet Judgment targets both light and warmth for the earth. Sunlight is significantly diminished by reducing the daylight hours by one-third, resulting in freezing many to death and eliminating many types of the few remaining crops which survived the first Trumpet Judgment. With the other judgments having taken away so many basic necessities there will be an increased reliance on natural light. But the reduction in moonlight by one-third and fewer stars makes nighttime activity more difficult, so the time available to accomplish basic survival actions is further restricted. This means there will be even more hardship when trying to deal with all the accumulating disasters. Again, divinely caused, literal and real -- not allegory, not symbolic, but real. This is not some gradual climate change or man-caused issue; it is divinely caused, sudden, and catastrophic in its effects.

The first four Trumpet Judgments targeted nature, and therefore mankind – especially unbelieving mankind – which have been killed in large numbers while the rest are starving, thirsty, freezing, diseased and mostly in the dark on a stinking, rotting, ugly planet. Misery would seem to be at a peak, but it will get much worse. And what happens in the remaining three judgments will not be what anyone on earth is expecting. In fact, the next Trumpet Judgments are called “Woes” for a very good reason. Misery will now be taken to new heights.

Rev 8:13 “As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!” ”

The first four Trumpet Judgments were against the earth's natural processes. Now the Trumpets change course and become demon attacks allowed by God on the unbelievers of the earth. As if the first four Trumpet Judgments had not been severe enough, God now allows criminal demons which have been imprisoned for thousands of years to be released to create havoc on the earth, and torture unbelieving mankind. The next three Trumpet Judgments are called “Woes” due to the extreme pain associated with them. Barely surviving the famines and disease caused by the first four Trumpet Judgments is one thing, but now severe pain from demon torture is added.

The “eagle” in this passage is one of the angels we have seen previously in Revelation who has the face of an eagle (Rev 4:7). This angel announces the next three Trumpet Judgments as “Woes”, meaning things are bad now, but are about to get much worse. And yes, a literal angel will literally fly around the earth and literally warn the earth's residents of these coming literal demonic judgments.

Once again it is important to note that God takes care of His own during the Tribulation, and the effects of the judgments, although they are widespread, believers will not be tortured or killed by these Woes unless they abandon their faith.

REVELATION CHAPTER 9

Satan & Demons – Fury on the Earth

Rev 9:1 “The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.”

The “star” is Satan (Isa 14:12; Ez 28:16) who is now banished to earth during the last part of the Tribulation. Satan became ruler of the earth when man sinned, passing rulership from Adam to Satan. But Satan does not enjoy staying on earth, so his demons do most of his work there. Many do not realize that Satan currently has full access to Heaven. He likes it there, and especially likes telling God about how believers on earth are not perfect (Rev 12:9-10, Job 1:6). God graciously allows Satan to come and go until near the end of the Tribulation when Satan is barred from Heaven forever. First he is thrown down to earth, then after the Tribulation will be put into jail in the Abyss during the Millennium, and finally he will reside in the Lake of Fire forever after the Tribulation and Millennium are completed. Once he is thrown out of Heaven and banned to earth he knows the end is very near for him. He has read the Bible. All he has left in his bag of tricks are chaos and destruction. He must try to find a way to wiggle out of his certain fate. (Lk 10:18; Rev 12:7)

Before Satan is kicked out of Heaven he will be given the keys to unlock the Abyss, a middle-earth jail where millions of criminal demons have been imprisoned for thousands of years since before man was created. These criminal demons violated the rules of the angelic conflict long ago in some unknown manner, so were imprisoned in the Abyss by God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The final three Trumpet Judgments or “Woes” will involve these demon criminals who are about to be released onto the earth where they will create chaos and torture and eventually kill unbelieving mankind. Even Satan will not be able to control them, as he was not able to control them in the ancient past when they violated the rules even Satan had abided by. It should be noted that demons have personalities and areas of extreme action just like humans. These demons being released during the Tribulation are pure criminals, and they will enjoy the torture they inflict on humans.

To be clear, the Tribulation will have different rules than now in the Church Age. During the Church Age God has very strict rules for Satan and demons to operate under, so they must generally behave and leave people alone, although they can sometimes possess the bodies of unbelievers who enable it. God the Holy Spirit ministers to believers on earth today and also restrains Satan and demons in many ways, so the operating rules do not currently allow what will happen during the Tribulation. But during the Tribulation the rules change due to the return to the Jewish Age, as God the Holy Spirit ceases His restraint on the earth, and the angelic conflict rules change to allow extreme demon activities. One of the rule changes is that these demons can physically attack people, and another is some of these particular demons (but not all) will be visible to humans. With this as background we will now see what happens when the imprisoned criminal demons are released after thousands of years in the Abyss. It will not be pretty.

Rev 9:2 “When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. ³ And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony

they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes.”

Satan unlocks the Abyss and releases his demon criminal armies who have been imprisoned for thousands of years in chains of smoke and darkness (2Pet 2:4; Jude 6). This fifth Trumpet Judgment releases multitudes of torturing demons which John describes as looking like locusts and having stingers like a scorpion. Being criminals they know how to torture people, and they will do it very well and with great enthusiasm. They have the ability to strike quickly and unexpectedly from the sky just as locusts can maneuver from place to place. People will not know when to expect them, so will live in constant fear. Unbelievers are tortured and also believers who depart from their faith and take the mark of the Beast, but God protects His faithful believers. This stinging demon torture will last for five months, one of the few references to timing of these judgments. Again, this is rather late in the second half of the Tribulation, during the time of the Great Tribulation. In fact, the “Woes” judgments almost define the term “Great Tribulation.”

Rev 9:6 “During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.”

During this first “woe” people would rather die than suffer this repeated stinging torture, but they cannot escape. The only true escape is salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, but most unbelievers will still refuse God's continuing offer of salvation and temporal deliverance from demon torture. It should be noted this is Satan attacking his own people, since they are attacking mostly unbelievers, and those believers who depart from their faith. The mantra is “make them suffer!” Evil has no loyalty. This part of the angelic conflict shows Satan as ruler of the earth is incapable of being “like the Most High God” which power he lusted for and caused his original Fall. Satan uses people and spits them out, like any other unfair and ungrateful dictator. And he dared to think of himself as equal to God.

Now John further amplifies the look of these stinging demons to explain more about them. The first thing to note is that these demons are visible to humans. All others including Satan will continue to be invisible, just as they are now.

Rev 9:7 “The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. ⁸ Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹ They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.”

This demon criminal group is compared to an army prepared for battle. They travel in swarms and make a horrifying noise which adds to the paralyzing fear they induce among their victims. The look of this demon army is like cavalry riding into battle with helmets, emblems and armor. The individual demons are fierce looking with faces resembling man. It should be noted that angels have souls just like man. Man was created to resolve the angelic conflict and so man is the same as angels in soul design, although man has reduced physical capability compared to angels.

Rev 9:11 “They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).”

The demon army is led by the number two demon of all time, Abbadon/Apollyon. At the Fall of Satan, 1/3 of all angels followed him in the revolution, including Abbadon. Before man was even created, Abbadon led his demon army in some serious violation of the rules of the angelic conflict, probably against the elect angels loyal to God. The details are not revealed to us. He and his demon army were imprisoned in middle-earth for this serious infraction before man was created, so they have been waiting a long time to be released. This demon army tortures unbelievers for five months, but will not be allowed to kill anyone. There is no defense against their attacks. Even so, there are two more “Woes” about to be released on the earth.

Rev 9:12 “The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.”

The three “Woes” are sequential. The first one lasts five months, then the sixth Trumpet Judgment which is also called the “Second Woe” is unleashed. The third Woe is during the seventh Trumpet Judgment which includes the Second Advent and Armageddon. We can see the timing of these three Woes is very late in the Tribulation, roughly during the last year or so.

Rev 9:13 “The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴ It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵ And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.”

The sixth Trumpet (second Woe) sets loose another huge demon army imprisoned deep under the Euphrates River led by four demon princes. This second demon army was also put into chains due to an angelic conflict violation in ancient times before man was created. We can see that Satan's armies in ancient times fought a vicious battle against the elect angels loyal to God, even to the point of violating the rules established by God, for which they were imprisoned. They are now released, not only to further torment mankind, but these demons are also allowed to kill 1/3 of remaining unbelieving mankind. They target unbelievers except for those Satan wants to spare for his own purposes, mainly those who are demon possessed. Satan will need some people to be spared for his coming battle to kill the Jews. Satan believes that if he eliminates the Jews, God would be defeated since God promised the Jews a Millennial Kingdom where Christ will rule over regathered Israel in the land promised to them. If the Jews are killed off, God could not fulfill His promise. This is the main reason why the Jews are targeted throughout human history.

Rev 9:16 “The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.”

$2 \times 10,000 \times 10,000 = 200,000,000$. That is a huge army of demons which cannot be avoided or defended against. They will roll through cities, nations, and continents like a giant war machine torturing and killing unbelievers at will. But believers will be spared because God will only allow these demons to attack unbelievers.

Rev 9:17 “The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur.”

Again we see this demon army is visible to mankind, and looks like a cavalry army prepared and dressed for battle, which is their purpose. The demons travel massed together, spewing poisons from their collective “mouths” as they proceed. The demons are mounted on some type of war machines which have weapons in both front and back.

Rev 9:18 “A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. ¹⁹ The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.”

The demons use chemical and biological agents to kill large numbers of unbelievers, fully 1/3 of those remaining who survived everything that has happened so far. The demon war machines spew killing agents from the front, and poison also comes from a snake-like tail whipping back and forth. Once again, God protects His own and they are spared.

Rev 9:20 “The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Unbelievers will still generally refuse to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. They become further hardened against God. They prefer to worship Satan's religious systems of empty deities, money, immorality, human power, sorcery, drug addiction, human sacrifice, and resort to violence and general human degeneracy of all forms. The Tribulation forces each person to choose between God and total degeneracy. As the end nears, only the most hardened unbelievers remain since demon armies will have killed all other unbelievers. The earth is now down to a hard-core set of degenerate unbelievers.

After 1/3 of all remaining unbelievers on earth have been killed during this 2nd Woe, next in line would normally be a discussion of the seven Bowl Judgments and the final Trumpet Judgment (which is the 3rd Woe). But we readers now get a break from the gruesome torture and death as John sees an angel delivering an unusual message of God's grace during a time of great disaster. John will now insert a series of parentheses during chapters 10 through 14 before returning to a discussion of these judgments.

REVELATION CHAPTER 10

The Angel and the Little Scroll

John now inserts another parenthesis at the direction of an angel. These interludes are used to explain important principles which do not otherwise fit neatly into the narrative. The timing is very close to the end of the Tribulation.

Rev 10:1 “Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.”

This is one of the highest ranking Angels, a Seraph, probably Michael. In this vision John sees the powerful Angel come down to earth. He is dressed in classic symbols of the power and glory of God. The cloud shows the glory of the Lord (Lk 9:35; Acts 1:9; 2Pet 1:17), the rainbow shows God will not destroy the earth during this Tribulation period (Gen 9:13-14), the face like the sun shows the light of righteousness and truth, legs as pillars of fire of fire show strength and divine protection. Overall the angel is dressed as a representative from Jesus Christ who has come down to earth to claim it as the possession of the King of Kings. The reality of the possession will occur at the Second Advent of Christ. This angelic action is simply staking a rightful claim to possess the property, and the scroll is the title deed to planet earth.

Rev 10:2 “He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land,”

The little scroll outlines the Second Advent, and is also title deed to planet earth, both land and sea and all in and on it. The true Owner is Jesus Christ Who will soon come to claim it as His own. Satan will be evicted as a squatter and claim jumper who stole it from Adam. The Lord had given rulership to Adam before he sinned, but Adam lost that rulership to Satan by his disobedience when he ate from the forbidden tree.

Rev 10:3 “and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. ⁴ And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.”

The Seraph Angel shouted a message which was echoed by seven other “thunder” angels. But the Holy Spirit did not allow John to record the message from the Seven Thunder angels. That message will only be revealed at the Second Advent by Jesus Christ Himself. Some things are just not meant for us to know.

The First Advent of Jesus Christ was announced by the archangel Gabriel surrounded by the heavenly hosts of elect angels. The Second Advent is announced by Michael holding a tiny scroll echoed by the voice of the Seven Thunder angels. The First Advent provided salvation, but the Second Advent reclaims the earth for Jesus Christ to rule during the Millennial Kingdom. The First Advent was accomplished by Jesus Christ in humility and as a suffering servant. The Second Advent will be accomplished by the resurrected Christ as an avenging warrior who claims what is rightfully due to Him.

Rev 10:5 “Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. ⁶ And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “There will be no more delay!”

The Seraph Angel salutes the Lord Jesus Christ, and announces the Second Advent will commence. But since this is a parenthesis, the actual events of the Second Advent will unfold during Chapter 19, which is still eight chapters away. In the meantime we go back to the events which will lead up to the Second Advent, including the remainder of the Trumpet and Bowl judgments. This is part of the non-linear writing of Revelation.

Rev 10:7 “But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”

The seventh Trumpet will include the Second Advent. The “mystery of God” referenced here includes what the prophets of the Old Testament were given as a preview of the Tribulation, and all the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding the Tribulation will be fulfilled before the Tribulation ends. Nothing will be left unaccomplished. The prophets were not given the entire picture of the Second Advent, but merely glimpses which were necessary for them to reveal. But John is provided a more complete view as we will see in Chapter 19.

Rev 10:8 “Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: “Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” ⁹ So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but ‘in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.’” ¹⁰ I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.”

John is told to take the little scroll and eat it. The story of the Second Advent may taste sweet for a time, but the underlying story is one of unbelievable misery, destruction and death on the earth. Ezekiel was also told to eat the scroll of woe given to him:

Ezekiel 3:1 “And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.” ² So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. ³ Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. ⁴ He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them.”

The words were a warning of disaster and woe. Even though the Second Advent is righteous and absolute justice, it will result in the death of all remaining unbelievers on earth, and the imprisonment of Satan and all fallen angels. For those on the side of God it will be sweet, but very bitter for those on Satan's side.

Rev 10:11 “Then I was told, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.” ”

John is told he must prophesy about many more things which will unfold during the future times. But first, another parenthesis. As previously noted, the revelation of the future times does not fit neatly into a linear discussion since there is so much to tell and so many important issues to learn about. And we are only told what we need to know, not everything we want to know. Once again we are about to go back in time to look at another important issue.

REVELATION CHAPTER 11

The Two Witnesses

The next parenthesis (yes, there are many, but they teach us much) discusses how two great prophets from the Old Testament will be brought back to life to serve as heralds and evangelists during the Tribulation. Just as John the Baptist was the herald of the First Advent of Jesus Christ, these two witnesses will be the heralds of the Second Advent of Christ. All three have the same message – prepare the way for the Lord. This time the message is to prepare the way for the Second Advent of Jesus Christ which will be the culminating event of the Tribulation. But first, John needs to do some measuring.

Rev 11:1 “I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. ² But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.”

John was given a surveying instrument to measure the dimensions of the Tribulation temple, which has not yet been built as of our time. When it will be built, before the Tribulation or during the early part of the Tribulation, is unknown and does not matter. Jerusalem will be spiritually bankrupt during the Tribulation as it sells out to a worldwide satanic religion headed by the Beast-Antichrist dictator, except for a remnant of true believers. The Tribulation temple in Jerusalem will be a place of false religion, first apostate Judaism, then the seat of power for the False Prophet and his worldwide satanic religion. So the Tribulation temple will not have any spiritual significance. At the exact midpoint of the Tribulation a statue of the Beast-Antichrist will be placed in the temple in Jerusalem as part of this worldwide religious system headed by the Beast-Antichrist, who will be worshiped as a god. The temple during the Tribulation must exist, but it does not have the importance of the earlier temples of the Old Testament. The point here is it will be the place where the two witnesses evangelize and teach despite the temple's use to promote false religion. The “gentiles”, meaning the Beast-Antichrist's religious forces, will defile the temple area with their false religion for 3 ½ years (42 months). That time period is the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, which Jesus referred to as the “Great Tribulation”. This is also the time period when the two witnesses will be evangelizing. This means the two witnesses will appear at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

As background for what is happening at this point, it is useful to look at Jerusalem's role during the Tribulation. The nation of Israel will generally be an apostate nation and not functioning as a spiritual nation, so Jerusalem will not be a spiritual center. But as we have noted, many Jews will become believers in Jesus Christ as the spiritual blindness of Jews will be lifted as a result of the Rapture, but they will be living in a spiritually bankrupt nation led by an evil dictator. During the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, Jerusalem and Israel enjoy relative prosperity amidst a world in turmoil. The rest of the world will be conspiring to accumulate power during the first half of the Tribulation. The Beast-Antichrist will not yet have been revealed for what he is, and will consolidate power by first conquering 3 countries, then combining them with seven others into a ten nation confederation (the Revived Roman Empire). The kings of the North, South, and East will also consolidate power during this time. After 3 ½ years, the Beast-Antichrist makes an alliance with the ruler of Israel (the False Prophet), forming a worldwide satanic religion which incorporates the remnants of apostate Judaism with other false religions, makes the Beast-Antichrist defacto leader of Israel, and places the Beast-Antichrist's statue in the temple as an object of worship (Rev 17 - 18). At that point all believers living

in Israel must flee to the high desert areas of present day Jordan, formerly known as Edom, Moab and Ammon during Old Testament times, to wait out the remaining 3 ½ years of the Tribulation (Matt 24:15). As we shall see later, the 144,000 witnesses will have been martyred for their efforts to evangelize during the first half of the Tribulation. With no evangelists remaining in Israel, God provides the two Old Testament witnesses to evangelize during the second half of the Tribulation, during which time (the 42 months mentioned in vs 2) Jerusalem will be “trampled” by gentile nations which will exert their influence through the False Prophet, who is the Jewish Dictator of Israel, but has aligned with the Beast-Antichrist. Jerusalem will sell out to the Beast-Antichrist's religious system, and becomes mired in Satan's worldwide false religion. It is into this backdrop that the two witnesses enter the scene at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

Rev 11:3 “And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

The two witnesses will preach for 3 ½ years (3 ½ years = 42 months = 1260 days), so they will arrive at the exact mid-point of the Tribulation. God never gives up on grace, and evangelism will continue despite the evil in the world. The Jewish believers of the first half of the Tribulation will have recently fled to the mountains for divine protection and to wait for the Second Advent, as instructed by Matthew 24. This is because they must be reserved as a remnant of believers who will populate the Millennial Kingdom, so their sole job is to survive the remainder of the Tribulation. The two witnesses arrive in Israel where no evangelists remain, and they will preach the gospel from the temple and convert many Jews to Christ. These converts during the second half of the Tribulation are instructed to remain to fight the enemy armies and will successfully defend the remnant of believers in Jerusalem from the attacks of the Beast-Antichrist forces near the end of the Tribulation. These two heralds make it clear that this is not about them, but rather it is all about Jesus Christ returning to earth as promised. And so their message is believe in Jesus Christ as Savior or perish. But who are they?

They have been here on earth before, and are Moses and Elijah – yes the exact same two who were on earth a couple thousand years ago. Their bodies were preserved after death for this future use, even though Satan fought Michael attempting to take the body of Moses because he knew about this future event (Jude 1:9). And Elijah departed the earth apart from death in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11). Note that it cannot be Enoch, who also departed the earth apart from death, since he was not a Jew (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5). Moses and Elijah are resuscitated from the dead and brought back in their human bodies which have been kept in a safe place. They were last seen at the Transfiguration of Christ when Jesus talked with them as witnessed by Peter, James, and John (Matt 17:1-9). And so they will return to earth during the Tribulation to evangelize and serve as heralds to proclaim the coming of the Lord (Malachi 3:1).

Rev 11:4 “They are “the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. ⁶ They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.”

These two are described as olive trees (strong leadership -- Zeph 4:3,11) and lampstands lighting the way. The world leaders will hate them and their message about Jesus Christ, and will want them dead. But the two have special divine powers to repel attacks and even kill attackers. They can cause drought, plagues, and disasters at will to demonstrate the validity of their message. It will only rain

when and if they allow it. If attacked, they will kill with a word from their mount. So they will be respected but hated. But God has a trick in store for the world, as these two will be killed by a demon.

Rev 11:7 “Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. ⁸ Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. ¹⁰ The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.”

As the Second Advent nears and their witnessing is complete, God allows one of the demons out of the Abyss (Abaddon) to kill them both. Their corpses will lay in the streets of spiritually bankrupt and degenerate Jerusalem – like Egypt and Sodom of old -- for 3 ½ days and no one will bury them. This will coincide with the total darkness over the Beast-Antichrist's empire just prior to the Second Advent. Their deaths will be a cause for great celebration among the unbelieving populace, especially among the false religious leaders who hated them for opposing their idolatry. But their celebration will soon turn into panic and intense fear.

Rev 11:11 “But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.”

Resuscitated once again, the two show the power of God to an evil world, then are taken up into Heaven as the world watches in disbelief and horror. That spectacular event will be a signal that the seventh Trumpet is about to begin. They are resuscitated on the day the Lord will return.

Rev 11:13 “At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

At the time the two witnesses are taken up into Heaven, Jerusalem is devastated by a large earthquake and 7000 die instantly. These 7000 will be from the Beast-Antichrist's forces which will be occupying Jerusalem and fighting the Jewish believer militia. Since Moses and Elijah are on the earth from the mid-point of the Tribulation and onward for 1260 days, this verse takes place during the Second Advent which also occurs after 1260 days, so their departure occurs on the same day as the Second Advent. This earthquake allows Jewish believers fighting the Beast-Antichrist's forces in Jerusalem to escape through the crevice formed by the earthquake. More about this issue later. Some people convert due to the event, but most do not. Now the true believers begin to celebrate.

Now that the two witnesses have been discussed, John returns to the Seals, Trumpets, Bowls, and woes.

Rev 11:14 “The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.”

The “3rd Woe” includes events just prior to the Second Advent, and also includes the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. John will now give a quick preview but will leave most of the discussion to later chapters. This 3rd Woe includes the seventh Trumpet and the seventh Bowl (we have not yet discussed the Bowl Judgments, which will be seen in chapter 16). The armies of the world will gather to attempt to destroy Israel and the Jews and will end up facing each other at Armageddon, at which point the

Lord returns. The Second Advent is not so much a single event as a series of events which occur as Jesus Christ returns and completes the task of cleansing the earth from evil in preparation for His rule during the Millennial Kingdom. As we shall discuss later, this process takes 75 days.

Rev 11:15 “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

The Second Advent will end the Tribulation and set the stage for the Millennium where Christ will rule for 1000 years on earth, and then forever after that on a new earth. The “Lord” here in this verse refers to the Father as Lord of the angels, and of course “Messiah” refers to Jesus Christ.

Rev 11:16 “And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small—and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

Jesus Christ, eternal God and now God-Man forever since the First Advent, returns to claim the earth as His inheritance. The angels worship Jesus Christ for justly destroying His enemies who have martyred believers in great numbers. Now the Millennium will begin and will last for 1000 years, but it must start out with only believers on the earth. So all unbelievers must be removed from the earth before the Millennium can begin. Unbelievers will continue to reside temporarily in Hell until after the Millennium, then they will all face the Great White Throne judgment and will then be transferred into the eternal Lake of Fire.

Rev 11:19 “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.”

The true temple which has always been in Heaven, and only mirrored on earth, is now opened to reveal the real Ark of the Covenant which is Jesus Christ. The throne room of Heaven is in the Temple of Heaven. The ark's wood overlaid with gold represented the God-Man Jesus Christ who would bear the sins of the world as shown by the contents of the ark, which were the tablets of the Ten Commandments and other items representing the sins of mankind. This verse will reveal demonstrations power shown from Heaven to earth as the Millennium is about to begin.

However, this chapter has been a parenthesis and only an overview, so it is explaining the future events out of sequence. There are 10 more chapters of Revelation remaining. Now John will retrace and fill in additional details with another parenthesis about events which will take place during the middle of the Tribulation. These parenthetical discussions by John are necessary to provide details which could not be covered during a linear time line discussion. While they make the time line and sequence of events more difficult to understand, they are required to explain what God wants believers to know. And that is the real point of prophecy, which is knowing what God wants believers to know rather than understanding every detail about the future. God wants us to live by faith, not by knowing the future in precise detail.

REVELATION CHAPTER 12

The Woman and the Dragon

Another parenthesis is now inserted which focuses on the subject of anti-Semitism during the Tribulation. Satan has been trying to eliminate the Jews since long ago when it became clear how important they are to God's plan. God has promised the Jews a Millennial Kingdom with vast lands which they have never fully possessed, and the Messiah as their King. Satan sees elimination of the Jews as the way to win the angelic conflict since he believes God could not fulfill His promises if there were no Jews remaining on earth, and therefore God would lose this ancient conflict and Satan could avoid the Lake of Fire. The Tribulation will be a time of great holocaust for the Jews unlike any other time in history, and Jeremiah referred to it as "a time of trouble for Jacob" (Jer 30:7). Even though Satan's plan to eliminate the Jews as a means of winning the angelic conflict is absurd, it is all he has.

Rev 12:1 "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head."

The woman is Israel (son of Abraham), with the twelve tribes of Israel represented as stars on a crown. The sun is Jacob (son of Israel) and the moon the mothers (Rachel and Leah) of the twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen 37:9).

Rev 12:2 "She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth."

Jesus Christ the Messiah came out of the "woman" Israel, who went through much pain to deliver Him to the world. The history of Israel is one of significant suffering due to anti-Semitism and satanic attacks and interference which was originally aimed at preventing the Savior from fulfilling His mission, and is now aimed at simply destroying the Jews as a race.

Rev 12:3 "Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. 4 Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born."

Satan is the red dragon. This description is symbolic of how he acts, not how he looks. Satan is one of the most beautiful creatures ever created (Isa 14:12) which is one reason for his fall due to arrogance. The 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns are from Daniel Chapter 7 and describe the makeup of political confederation of nations ruled by Satan's man the Beast-Antichrist, which will be discussed in more detail later. Satan took 1/3 of all the angels with him when he revolted against God, so 1/3 of all angels ("stars flung to earth") became fallen angels or demons under the command of Satan. Satan tried desperately to prevent Jesus Christ from providing salvation, including trying to prevent His birth, trying to kill Him along with all Jewish babies in Israel, trying to tempt Jesus to turn away from His mission, and also by trying to have people kill him on several other occasions. But of course Satan failed at every attempt, and the cross was God's plan, not what Satan wanted. Satan's man during the Tribulation, the Beast-Antichrist, will also try desperately to kill all Jews. This is why the Jews in Israel must flee to the mountains at the mid-point of the Tribulation in order to survive the worst holocaust in history which will occur during the second half of the Tribulation.

Rev 12:5 “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶ The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.”

Jesus Christ will “rule the nations” from regathered Israel during the Millennium, but first the Tribulation will occur. The Jews who are believers during the first half of the Tribulation must flee Israel and go to the high desert areas of present day Jordan at the mid-point of the Tribulation and remain there during the last 3 ½ years to be protected from the holocaust until the Millennium begins (Matt 24: 16-27; Rev 12:6; Dan 11:31). Otherwise they will be killed by the Beast-Antichrist's forces. So those Jews who become believers in Israel during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation must flee immediately when the statue of the Beast-Antichrist (which is called the Abomination of Desolation) is put up in the temple in Jerusalem, and they must not leave their hiding places in Jordan until they personally see the Lord return. Satan will try to lure them out, and if they leave their dome of divine protection they will be killed. Following instructions precisely will be crucial during the Tribulation.

The parenthesis shifts focus again, now to Satan's eviction from Heaven, and what that means for those living on earth, especially the Jews. This passage fills in additional details from the earlier discussion in Rev 9:1 which said “I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.”

Rev 12:7 “Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

We have previously seen how Satan has been allowed to reside in Heaven during the time of man living on the earth. He regularly travels back and forth between Heaven and earth, which God allows. Man is the key to resolving the conflict between God and Satan, so God is patient in putting up with Satan's nonsense. But Satan will be permanently thrown out of Heaven during the middle of the Tribulation, and he will not be happy about it. Satan prefers Heaven, and the earth is not Satan's favorite residence. Generally Satan and his demons do not fight against God's elect angels in Heaven since God does not allow it, but when Satan is about to be thrown out of Heaven he puts up a fight. This verse explains the battle in Heaven, and how Satan loses his fight with the Archangel Michael resulting in Satan and his demons being thrown out of Heaven, never to return. Isa 14:12 says: “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” (See also Ez 28: 12-16, Lk 10:18).

Rev 12:10 “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹ They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

God's elect angels rejoice to see Satan and his demons finally thrown out of Heaven, and look forward to the end of the Tribulation when Jesus Christ will imprison all of these miscreants and set up His 1000 year Millennial reign on earth under perfect environment. Perfect environment is only possible in

the absence of Satan and his fallen angels. Until the time Satan is thrown out of Heaven he regularly accuses believers of sins and imperfections to God, but Jesus Christ provided salvation to those imperfect believers, so Satan's accusations are meaningless. We see how believers during the Tribulation will not shrink from death, and many will be martyred as a result of Satan's fury on the earth and their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ or take the mark of the beast. God allows this martyrdom as a testimony, but He will also judge harshly those who kill His believers. Satan knows his time is very short. He has had many thousands of years of freedom since his revolt against God, but that will soon end. He will be in a rage after being cast out of Heaven, and the entire earth will suffer for the next 3 ½ years as a result. In fact, it will be the worst period on earth in all human history. Matthew 24:21 says: "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."

Several events happen simultaneously at the exact mid-point of the Tribulation. The first event is the installation of an idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist, called the Abomination of Desolation, in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. This triggers the second simultaneous event, since the idol statue is a sign for all Jewish believers in Israel to flee to the mountains where God has provided a place of divine protection. And the third event is Satan and all fallen angels being kicked out of Heaven and thrown down to earth. This creates a crisis on earth for Jewish believers, and timing is crucial so they must follow instructions carefully. Looking at Matthew 24 we see the instructions to those Jewish believers in Israel when Satan is thrown out of Heaven:

Matt 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."

The passage in Matthew above says "those who are in Judea" must flee when the idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist is put into the temple in Jerusalem. At the time of writing Judea was only southern Israel including Jerusalem, since the north-central part of current day Israel was mostly occupied by the Samaritans, and not part of Judea. But in the Tribulation this could apply to the entirety of what will be Israel during that future time since the term "Judea" was a Roman term for "the land of the Jews". Of course, Jewish believers will be scattered throughout the entire world, but those Jewish believers outside Israel will remain where they are. They will all be regathered to Israel after the Tribulation is over. So the Jewish believers living in Israel during the Tribulation will be prepared, having been warned by Matthew 24 to flee immediately when the idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist is put into the temple. They must obey instantly or they will be killed by the demons having just been thrown out of Heaven with Satan. Following instructions and timing will be crucial. And as Matthew implies, it would be wise to not have children during the Tribulation. These will be desperate times, and believers must be ready to act quickly and move without being hampered. Better to wait until the Millennium when a woman could have several hundred children during the 1000 years of a life without aging.

Now we see how these simultaneous events come together at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

Rev 12:13 "When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. ¹⁵ Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river,

to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.”

At the same time Jewish believers are fleeing Israel into the high desert country, Satan and all fallen angels are thrown out of Heaven. Upon seeing those Jewish believers fleeing, Satan and his demons attack them, trying to stop them from getting to their place of divine protection in the mountains east of Israel. This attack is described here as “the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.” But the Jewish believers will be protected as the passage says “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness.”

The time available for leaving will be short, and their escape will require supernatural divine protection referred to as the “wings of an eagle” to protect them on their trip out of Israel, as this phrase is regularly used for divine protection: Ex 19:4 “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.” Deut 32: 9-11 - “like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft.”

Satan will try to prevent the Jewish believers from escaping Israel by “spewing water like a river” which refers to the demons thrown out of Heaven along with Satan pursuing the fleeing Jews like a torrent, and possibly also flooding the Jordan River valley which the Jews will be crossing, but that attack will fail as God counters it and protects the fleeing Jews. But any who delay their departure will be killed. Once they cross into the country of Jordan, in a region generally east and southeast of the Dead Sea, they are protected by God with supernatural hiding, angelic protection, and provisions during the remaining 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. Once again Satan will be frustrated in his attempts to gain some advantage. Now that these Jewish believers have escaped and are under a supernatural dome of divine protection Satan's attempts to kill all Jews will have failed, so this part of his evil plan will have been foiled.

The phrase Jesus used in Matt 24:21 “for then there will be great distress” literally means “there will be great Tribulation”, and is where the name for this period originates. Note that the term “Great Tribulation” only applies to the last half of the seven year period we generally call “the Tribulation”, so the first 3 ½ years was not given a specific name by Jesus, although both Jesus and the prophets referred to the entire seven year period in other ways. For convenience we simply refer to the entire seven years as “the Tribulation”.

Rev 12:1 “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.”

After Satan fails to kill the Jewish believers fleeing Israel at the mid-point of the Tribulation he becomes even more enraged and frustrated. As a result, he will take out his anger on those who become believers during the second half of the Tribulation. This is why there will be such a holocaust of Jewish believers during the second half of the Tribulation. These are the martyrs seen around the throne of Heaven in Revelation 7:14 “And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Although John does not tie the issues in here, there are other events which occur at the exact mid-point of the Tribulation. The two witnesses Moses and Elijah appear on the scene as discussed in chapter 11. We know this because they will be on the earth for 1260 days, which is 3 ½ years. Rev 11:3 “And I

will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” While all Jewish believers are fleeing Israel after seeing the Abomination of Desolation, and Satan is being thrown out of Heaven, Moses and Elijah arrive on the earth to begin proclaiming the gospel. The original 144,000 witnesses will have been martyred by this time, and with the remaining Jewish believers having fled Israel, new witnesses must be brought onto the scene to evangelize in Israel. These two witnesses will depart as the Second Advent is about to occur.

Another important issue which comes into view at the mid-point of the Tribulation is the full reveal of the Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet for who they really are. Until this point they will have been gaining power and making alliances, but they will only come to full power at the mid-point. The Beast-Antichrist will have been waging war and consolidating ten nations into his Revived Roman Empire during the first half of the Tribulation. After he has gained maximum power Satan can begin using him for his real mission, which is serving as his primary leader on the earth. With Satan confined to earth he will exert maximum influence over this evil leader through demon possession and use him for two purposes, first to set up a satanic worldwide religious system, and secondly to attack Israel in an attempt to destroy it completely and kill all Jews. And the False Prophet will assist in the task of establishing the Beast-Antichrist as a false god under this satanic religious system, and impose that religion on the nation of Israel.

Having made numerous references to the Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet in previous chapters, it is now time for John to discuss these two evil leaders in detail.

REVELATION CHAPTER 13

The Two Beasts – The Antichrist & The False Prophet

Now that Satan has been cast out of Heaven and the second half of the Tribulation has begun, referred to by Jesus as the Great Tribulation, John turns to a discussion of Satan's chosen man who will be the King of the West and Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. 1 John 2:18 says “you have heard that the antichrist is coming...” This passage discusses that man.

Rev 13:1 “The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.”

Having been thrown out of Heaven, the dragon Satan is now confined to earth and is desperate since he is running out of time and knows it. Satan is seen standing “on the shore of the sea”. The “sea” refers to the gentile nations as opposed to “the land” which is Israel. Satan chooses a man called here “a beast coming out of the sea” from among the gentile nations who will be his proxy and do his will. Satan empowers his human counterpart to seize a massive amount of power, and his ultimate goal is to eliminate the Jews. This man is often called just “the Antichrist”, but because of the way John presents him we will call this man the Beast-Antichrist, who is a gentile, probably from a Western nation since he will take over as King of the West. Satan will empower him personally through demon possession and Satan will also personally possess him at times, something extremely rare. Satan has read the book of Revelation, but he wants to re-write the ending. He chooses a man and gives him great power – the power he offered to Jesus Christ during the three temptations, but Jesus refused to accept it from him. (Matt 4:1-11)

The satanic actions described in Revelation and which will occur during the Tribulation cannot occur during the current Church Age because the Holy Spirit restrains and prevents such extreme demon activities. God has rules for what can happen during each Age, and those rules must be obeyed by Satan. As we have noted, God puts up with Satan's nonsense, but only within limits. But during the short time of the Tribulation those limits will be expanded for a purpose, so the Holy Spirit removes His protection from the earth to allow Satan to have additional latitude during the waning days of his ancient revolution against God, which will be in its final chapter. God gives Satan every opportunity to make his case that he should not be thrown into the Lake of Fire, but of course he will fail.

Perhaps the best overview of the Beast-Antichrist was from the Apostle Paul:

2 Thess 2:3 “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day [Second Advent] will not come until the rebellion [Tribulation] occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction [Beast-Antichrist]. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple [Abomination of Desolation], proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back [Holy Spirit] will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming [Second Advent]. 9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the

lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie.”

Most of the other detailed information about the Beast-Antichrist comes from Daniel Chapter 7, and the multiple heads, horns, and crowns on this Beast-Antichrist discussed here in Revelation relate back to Daniel's prophecies. Daniel described four different beasts which look like various animals including a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a ten horned beast. The various beasts represent the four great empires of the ancient world, namely Chaldea (Nebuchadnezzar), Persia (Cyrus the Great), Macedonia (Alexander the Great), and Rome (the Caesars). We pick up the passage in Daniel at the discussion of the fourth beast, the Roman Empire:

Dan 7:7 “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.”

Dan 7:15 “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ¹⁷ ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth.’”

Daniel prophesied about the coming of the Roman Empire 500 years before Julius Caesar. Daniel foresaw how Rome would become a great empire through conquests on a scale unequaled in human history. Daniel also foresaw that Rome would be made up of ten major nations/regions it would conquer, and these ten are part of what is now Western Europe, North Africa, Greece, and part of Asia Minor. So the fourth beast described by Daniel is ancient Rome during the Caesars. It conquered the world, devouring many nations and peoples. It had ten horns, meaning ten regions as defined in ancient times.

Now Daniel's vision turns to the Tribulation, when an empire ruled by the Beast-Antichrist will come out of the nations which were part of the ancient Roman Empire. Daniel describes how the Beast-Antichrist as ruler of this Revived Roman Empire will consolidate his power:

Dan 7:8 “While I was thinking about the horns [ancient nations], there before me was another horn, a little one [Beast-Antichrist], which came up among them [nations during the Tribulation]; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.”

Dan 7:23 “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom [ancient Rome] that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom [ancient Rome]. After them another [11th] king will arise [Beast-Antichrist], different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people [Jews] and try to change the set times [prophecies about the Tribulation] and the laws [totally lawless]. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time [3 ½ years].’”

This “little horn” is the Beast-Antichrist who during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation will conquer (“uproot”) three of the ten large “horns” (nations) and the other seven “horns” (nations) will submit to

his rule as the King of the West during the Tribulation. He will come from an 11th nation which was apparently not part of the ancient Roman Empire. This confederation of nations under the Beast-Antichrist will become the Revived Roman Empire of the second half of the Tribulation, which is consolidated from ten separate nations by warfare and treaty during the first half of the Tribulation. This also relates back to the first Seal, the Rider on the White Horse (dictatorship), and the second Seal, the Fiery Red Horse (worldwide warfare). So the Beast-Antichrist consolidates power by warfare during the first half of the Tribulation setting up his evil tyrannical rule over a ten nation confederation made up of former Roman Empire countries and uses his accumulated power as a tool of Satan during the last part of the Tribulation. He will then attempt to conquer the rest of the world as his predecessors the Caesars had done. He will do Satan's work as he tries to destroy Israel and all Jews everywhere during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation (the meaning of “time, times, and half a time” – 1 year plus 2 years plus ½ year = 3 ½ years).

The passages from Daniel describe the Beast-Antichrist and his origins several thousand years before he actually arrives. Daniel says the Beast-Antichrist will rule western nations which were formerly part of the ancient Roman Empire, so his empire is not made up of Islamic nations or other regions. Those regions will have their own power spheres and will also be pulled together by Satan into his evil plans. More will be discussed about the origins of the Beast-Antichrist in Revelation chapter 17.

Now back to Revelation 13, we see the various animal analogies applied to the Beast-Antichrist:

Rev 13:2 “The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.”

The Beast-Antichrist has some of the traits of the various nations and rulers of the ancient world – a mixture of speed, strength and cunning -- but he will be different. Satan will empower him directly, making him one of the most powerful dictators in history. The Beast-Antichrist is discussed in a number of Bible passages and is referred to by several names. Although the term “antichrist” has stuck as the name commonly used for him, the Bible calls him “the Beast”, “the Beast out of the Sea”, “the antichrist”, “the man of sin”, “the little horn”, “the man of lawlessness”, “the man doomed to destruction”, and “the lawless one” as noted in the following representative passages:

2 Thess 2:3 -- “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, **the man doomed to destruction**. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

2 Thess 2:8 -- “And then **the lawless one** will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.”

1 John 2:18 -- “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that **the antichrist** is coming, even now many antichrists have come.”

Rev 13:2 “**The beast** I saw resembled a leopard”

Dan 7:8 – “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was **another horn, a little one...**”

Dan 11:36 – “The **king who will do as he pleases**”.

The rise of the Beast-Antichrist will be orchestrated by Satan with a dramatic flair which builds him up as a deity and therefore an object of worship in the eyes of the world. But his worshipers will actually be worshipping Satan.

Rev 13:3 “One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. 4 People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”

The Beast-Antichrist will survive a “fatal wound” received during an assassination attempt since a “sword” is used against him (Rev 13:14). He will appear to actually die, but will be revived and live when everyone on earth thought he was dead. This near-death experience will cement his “deity” image and help promote him as head of the new religious order sponsored by Satan. People of all nations will see his Satan-induced power and will witness his “resurrection” from the dead, then will worship Satan through the Beast-Antichrist. The two will be practically indistinguishable. This worldwide adoration mixed with his presumed “miraculous resurrection” leads to the Beast-Antichrist setting up his own religion where he is the deity, and he places his own statue in the temple in Jerusalem to be worshiped as an idol (the Abomination of Desolation). Satan is such a copy-cat, and this becomes one reason why this man is called the antichrist, because Satan uses him to mimic and mock the true salvation work and person of Jesus Christ, including Christ's miracles, death and resurrection. As we noted earlier, when the Jewish believers in Israel see the Beast-Antichrist idol statue called the Abomination of Desolation put into the temple in Jerusalem they must flee to the high desert areas of Jordan where they will be protected, or they will be killed.

The Beast-Antichrist will be a genius, so we must give him his due. He will accomplish many things due to his combination of great intellect, communication skills, military genius, political skills, and even his use of false religion and idolatry to accomplish the will of his benefactor, Satan. Satan uses the man's innate skills, which will be numerous, and adds his own empowerment through demon possession and even Satan possession at times to make the Beast-Antichrist into a rock star level superhero world leader in the eyes of the degenerate unbelievers of the world. World events will also lure people into a desire for a strongman to solve the world's problems resulting from the “Four Horsemen” judgments of Revelation 6. He even uses false miracles to wow the masses, which will be discussed later. So his rise to power is swift and decisive, and he becomes the world's most famous and popular man and the public will literally worship him as a deity. But his precipitous fall 3 ½ years later will mirror his meteoric rise.

The following passages in the Bible describe the Beast-Antichrist's significant capabilities:

1) Political skill – pulls together many (Rev 13:1; Dan 7: 20-21); 2) Military skill (Rev 13:1; Dan 7: 20-21; Rev 16), 3) Religious skill – sets up false religion which deceives the masses (Rev 13:6-8, Rev 17+18), 4) Power of miracles (2 Thess 2:1-12), 5) eloquent communicator. Again, demon and Satan possession will enhance his innate skills to levels where people will see him as a god—but only for a short time.

The key to the success of the Beast-Antichrist is his ability to put in place a system of evil power which takes away individual freedom, especially freedom to worship anyone except himself, in exchange for the promise of security and economic benefit. The Tribulation will be a time of heightened insecurity for people due to the disruption of the Rapture, followed by extreme levels of disaster from the Four Horsemen and extreme natural disasters which we have already noted. Therefore, people will be ready to accept this dictator since he appears to have great power on several levels, and promises the masses he will keep them safe and secure. Of course, that will turn out to be a false promise of security, and they will lose their freedoms in exchange for nothing.

Rev 13:5 “The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months.”

Satan gives the Beast-Antichrist supernatural communication ability to issue false promises in a manner which makes them widely accepted as truth. Add to that his arrogant and blasphemous tone, and the degenerate world will view him with awe and reverence, and will refuse to turn to the true Savior Jesus Christ. His short-lived power will last for 3 ½ years until the Second Advent of Christ.

Rev 13:6 “It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.”

The Beast-Antichrist sets himself up as a deity and continually blasphemes God and all associated with God, in Heaven and on earth. His taunting of God will make him a hero to the degenerate masses, who will adore him. He turns his statues into idols to be worshiped. He slanders God and the elect angels in Heaven because he cannot stand anyone having more power than he has, especially those beyond his reach to intimidate or harass. His absolute arrogance will further endear him to his adoring fans. They will think in their own arrogance that God must be powerless against him, since at first there does not appear to be any retribution against him. But God will only give him 3 ½ years, then it will all end. He will soon become the very first resident of the Lake of Fire, the eternal residence waiting for Satan, fallen angels, and unbelievers of all time.

Rev 13:7 “It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.”

The Beast-Antichrist will make a treaty with Israel during the early part of the Tribulation, then will break that treaty and occupy Israel without much resistance and install a puppet ruler over Israel who supports him. By the middle of the Tribulation the Beast-Antichrist will have a significant military presence in Israel, setting up a military target for the other three Kings to come after him at the end of the Tribulation resulting in the final battle at Armageddon. In the meantime, the Beast-Antichrist will exert great power over Israel, including military power, and also power over economic life and even power over life and death, but these powers will not cause Jewish believers to renounce their faith in Christ. This will severely frustrate the Beast-Antichrist. God permits persecution of believers in Israel to show His power through believers in the face of absolute evil. The Beast-Antichrist will have extreme power over many of the people of the world, and he will be one of the most powerful people of all time, humanly speaking. But he cannot control God's faithful believers, even though he will kill many of them for their refusal to comply with his system of evil. It should be noted that all believers in Israel will have fled to the mountains of Jordan before the Beast-Antichrist takes firm control of Israel, so the Jewish believers who will be in Israel during the second half of the Tribulation are recent converts. When we see their faith and martyrdom, we must remember what very new believers they are, and how impressive their display of faith will be under the circumstances.

Rev 13:8 “All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.”

Unbelievers on earth believe in the Beast-Antichrist instead of believing in Jesus Christ. They will prefer Satan's lie to the Truth. Worshiping the Beast-Antichrist will be satanic worship, since it is Satan's power they are seeing. This “hardness of heart” will be extreme among the degenerate masses during the Tribulation.

Rev 13:9 “Whoever has ears, let them hear. ¹⁰ “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.”

As noted, these will be new believers who become martyrs, none for more than a few years since the Rapture removed all believers before the Tribulation began, then at mid-Tribulation all believers in Israel fled to the mountains. After that flight to the hills, all new believers from that point on are required to remain and be prepared to fight when the time comes. These believers will endure much evil, and are required to have “patient endurance and faithfulness.” Those who sacrifice for the Lord during this extreme time of evil will receive their reward in Heaven. God allows evil to have its way for short periods of time throughout history, but God never loses control. The Beast-Antichrist will kill many believers, either directly or indirectly by taking away their ability to buy basic necessities since they will refuse the mark of the Beast. But the murderers are destined for much misery on earth during the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments followed by eternal condemnation.

The Beast out of the Land

Now another one of Satan's men comes into view, the Beast out of the Land (Israel), also called the False Prophet. This man will be the leader of Israel, so he is a Jewish unbeliever. He will make a treaty with the Beast-Antichrist early during the Tribulation and eventually will allow his army to occupy Israel. The False Prophet will also be the one who puts the idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist into the temple in Jerusalem. This Jewish leader is called the False Prophet since he will support the Beast-Antichrist in promoting his satanic false religion. The Beast-Antichrist will make the False Prophet his puppet leader in Israel to aid in spreading his evil religious system throughout Israel. The Beast-Antichrist will show his anti-Semitism later, but for now it suits his needs to work with this False Prophet and with Israel, especially to absorb the apostate remnants of religious Judaism into his own satanic religious system. While this is happening, many Jews are turning to Jesus Christ recognizing Him as their Savior.

Rev 13:11 “Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.”

The Beast out of the Land (not earth) means the False Prophet is from Israel, often referred to in the Bible as “the Land”. Recall that earlier we saw the term “the sea” used for gentile nations as the origin of the Beast-Antichrist, so now we see “the Land” used for Israel as the origin of this second Beast. “Beast” means they are both demon possessed and serve the “dragon” Satan. This one is known to us as the False Prophet since his primary role is as the religious supporter of the Beast-Antichrist, promoting him as a deity. So the False Prophet has a religious side to him, promoting a false satanic religion through idolatry. He is doing Satan's work, just like the Beast-Antichrist, which is why this verse says he “spoke like a dragon”. Horns in the Bible refer to power, and the False Prophet's “two horns” show he wields his own power as ruler of Israel and is also a powerful religious leader supporting the Beast-Antichrist as shown in the next verse.

The False Prophet is referred to in several ways throughout the Bible:

1) False Prophet (Matt 24:24; Rev 19:20); 2) Beast out of the land (Rev 13:11-18); 3) Dan the Serpent (Gen 49:16-18).

Rev 13:12 “It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. ¹⁴ Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.”

The False Prophet's alliance with the Beast-Antichrist is two-fold, both as puppet ruler in Israel and as a religious leader, and he will exercise full authority on behalf of the Beast-Antichrist. The False Prophet will perform pseudo miracles under the power of demons, including as it says here “causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth”. The two Beasts work together to do Satan's work in establishing and promoting the worldwide false religious system where the Beast-Antichrist is the deity and the False Prophet is his number one prophet and keeper of the false religion. Again we see how Satan tries to mimic God's truth by substituting falsehood to deceive the masses. The near-death and false resurrection of the Beast-Antichrist will be used by the False Prophet as a marketing tool to promote him to the masses as a deity, which is why the Abomination of Desolation idol – a statue of the Beast Antichrist -- is set up in the temple in Jerusalem at the direction of the False Prophet. This idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist was described by Daniel:

Dan 9:27 -- “He [Beast-Antichrist] will confirm a covenant with many [Israel] for one ‘seven’ [Tribulation 7 years]. In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up **an abomination that causes desolation**, until the end [Second Advent] that is decreed is poured out on him.”

Together the two Beasts set up a worldwide false religion based on worshiping the Beast-Antichrist, which in reality is worshiping Satan. The False Prophet will also be demon possessed and will perform amazing acts of false miracles using satanic power. Matthew 24:24 refers to the Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet working together: “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” Again we see God allowing Satan and his demons to do things which are not allowed under the rules during the Church Age, since the Holy Spirit currently acts to restrain such extreme demonic deceptive practices. But during the Tribulation the Holy Spirit restraints are withdrawn, and Satan is allowed to use open displays of demonism and false miracles. The world falls into the trap and accepts the lies of this false religion instead of accepting the grace of God through Jesus Christ the true Savior. This is why the judgments during the Tribulation will be so intensely destructive and deadly. God is gracious for a time, but He will not be mocked by false religion for long.

Rev 13:15 “The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶ It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,”

The False Prophet even causes the Abomination of Desolation idol in the temple in Jerusalem to appear to speak. This use of ventriloquist demons will fool many as demon voices will come from the idol statue itself. The deification of the Beast-Antichrist by the False Prophet will continue to build, and the entire world will become ensnared by this false religion. True believers who refuse to worship the idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist will be persecuted, and many will be killed for holding to their faith. Strong economic incentives will be used as the False Prophet forces people everywhere to take the mark of the Beast, and no one will be allowed to buy or sell anything without the mark. So the

incentive to comply and accept this religion will be very powerful. Even some believers will take the mark, but will suffer and even die for doing so. This religion is used by Satan to attempt to kill off believers, and many will be martyred. This is why believers who are in Israel at the time the idol statue is erected in the temple must flee to the mountains and remain there under divine protection until the Tribulation is over, since they will be the bulk of the Jewish believers who live to go into the Millennium.

We saw earlier in Matthew 24 how Jesus foretold of the idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist during the Tribulation and the requirement for all believers in Israel to flee and not come out of hiding until Jesus returns and the Tribulation is over:

Matt 24:15 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

Then Jesus went on to discuss the Tribulation as the worst period of human history:

Matt 24:21: “For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.”

Then Jesus talked about the False Prophet:

Matt 24:24: “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.”

When the idol statue of the Beast-Antichrist is set up in the temple in Jerusalem all believers in Israel must flee immediately without any delay to the high desert area of current day Jordan. If they do not flee quickly, they will be killed.

The False Prophet will devise a scheme for forcing all people everywhere to worship the Beast-Antichrist, and he will use economic incentives for this purpose.

Rev 13:17 “so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.”

The mark of the Beast-Antichrist is said to be 666, which is “the name of the beast” or “the number of its name”. The reason for the 666 is not clear today, but will be clear to those who have true wisdom during the Tribulation since they will have additional information about the Beast-Antichrist and the technology at that time which we do not have today. In today's terms the mark of the Beast would be something like a scan code symbol tattooed on the body, or an embedded microchip, but in the future it may be something else. This economic requirement will be so powerful that only the truly faithful believers will be able to resist, and that at the peril of their own death and the death of their family members. Later we will see God's warning to believers in Rev 14:9-10: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury.” There will be many believers who are martyred during the Tribulation for refusal to take the mark of the Beast, as seen in the earlier view in Revelation 4 of their souls around the altar near the throne of God in Heaven. There will also be believers who die because they take the mark of the Beast

in spite of having been warned not to do so. So taking the mark may spare the believer from death from the Beast's henchmen, but it will not spare the believer from death during God's judgments which are meant to target unbelievers.

The last half of the Tribulation will be a time of a total breakdown of society. People who are not believers will engage in a detachment from reality like never seen before. Freedom will be lost in exchange for the power and false sense of security from the State. There will be a worldwide false religion accepted en masse by people refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. Worshiping the true God will be a crime punishable by death. Good will be called evil and evil will be called good by the degenerate masses. The innocent will be judged as guilty by the State while criminals are declared to be heroes. Crime will be rampant as people prey on each other. Political power will replace individual liberty as all dissent is repressed. Police agencies will be used to enforce political dictates as only those who take the mark of the Beast can engage in economic activity, or buy or sell at all. Failure to have the mark will be a crime. All that is Truth will be called false, and the lie from Satan will be deemed to be the truth. The world will be turned upside down. That is because Satan at his core is a liar who promotes only lies, and hates the Truth.

REVELATION CHAPTER 14

Evangelism During the Great Tribulation

Chapter 11 began a discussion of evangelism during the second half of the Tribulation, and showed how Moses and Elijah will return to earth as evangelists. Now we are about to see another supernatural form of evangelization during the second half of the Tribulation, this time by angels. But John is first shown another vision which takes us ahead to the end of the Tribulation to reveal a scene of Jesus Christ at the Second Advent. With Him are the 144,000 martyred evangelists who were called out from among the unbelieving populace immediately after the Rapture as noted in Revelation 7. These 144,000 were martyred for evangelizing the populace, a crime punishable by death during the Tribulation.

Rev 14:1 “Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. ³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. ⁵ No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”

The Rapture removes all believers from the earth, leaving no one to evangelize the world when the Tribulation begins. But God always provides for evangelization, and 144,000 Jews will immediately believe in Jesus Christ after seeing the significance of the Rapture and will become the initial cadre of evangelists during the Tribulation. They will evangelize during the first 3 ½ years, and will be martyred simply because they evangelize. By the middle of the Tribulation they are all gone, which is why they are called the “firstfruits”, since they will be the early martyrs. Many more believers will be martyred after them. After the 144,000 are martyred God sends Moses and Elijah to evangelize from Jerusalem beginning at the mid-point of the Tribulation, and angels will also perform a spectacular form of evangelization never seen in human history, as we see next.

The Three Angels

Rev 14:6 “Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

At the mid-point of the Tribulation after the 144,000 evangelists are martyred, an angel will begin to evangelize the earth. We have seen that Moses and Elijah will return to earth to evangelize from Israel, and this angel flies around the entire earth to spread the gospel in every language. It is important to remember once again that such angelic actions do not happen during the Church Age since there are different rules for angels and the angelic conflict today. But this will be a literal angel doing this evangelization, and he literally flies around the earth proclaiming the gospel in “mid-heaven” meaning the highest point of the day, which is mid-day in each time zone.

Babylon

John now switches the subject to provide an overview of the judgment of the satanic false religion and the city where it will be headquartered, nicknamed Babylon. This will occur rather late during the second half of the Tribulation. The overview will be followed by more detailed information about the judgments.

Rev 14:8 “A second angel followed and said, “‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,’ which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

Along with the angelic evangelization comes warning of great disaster by a second angel. Babylon is both a literal city (not actually named Babylon) and also synonymous with the Beast-Antichrist's worldwide false religious system. Babylon will be the center of this worldwide false religion during the Tribulation, and many will be deceived leading to their eternal condemnation. Near the end of the Tribulation Babylon will be destroyed, and this second angel is announcing the reason for Babylon's total destruction. This discussion is not in the linear time line since we will learn more about Babylon later in Chapter 15.

Rev 14:9 “A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, ¹⁰ they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.” ¹² This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.”

A third angel warns that there will be grave consequences for unbelievers worshipping the Beast-Antichrist, both on earth and for all eternity. Also, believers must not take the mark of the Beast even though the temptation will be very strong due to the economic boycott of everyone who refuses the mark. Remember that since all believers will be removed prior to the start of the Tribulation, these will be relatively new believers. But great faith and endurance will be required of them. They must understand what the Bible says and follow it precisely. Time will be short, so there will be no time to waste.

Rev 14:13 “Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”

Refusing the mark of the Beast will result in martyrdom for many believers. The second half of the Tribulation will be a very difficult time for all believers. All will face deprivation, and many will die a martyr's death. God allows this evil to serve as a witness and aid in the evangelization of the hardened world. But God assures these believers they will be at rest in Heaven after their trials on earth are completed. They must remain strong and follow the commands found throughout Revelation. This also shows why all believers in Israel must flee to the mountains at the mid-point of the Tribulation. So many believers will be martyred during the last half of the Tribulation that a group of Jewish believers must be set aside and protected to populate the Millennium after the Tribulation ends, and that is the reason for Jews fleeing to the mountains at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

Preparation for Final Judgments: View From Heaven

The remainder of this chapter summarizes what will happen during the final judgments as most unbelievers remaining on earth will be killed by them. There are seven Bowl Judgments and one final Trumpet Judgment (the 3rd Woe) left to administer, and these occur near the end of the Tribulation. John now sees four angels who are engaged in harvesting the earth, which means killing unbelievers for the martyrdom of God's believers.

Rev 14:14 "I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶ So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. ¹⁷ "Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹ The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. ²⁰ They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia."

This is not the Lord sitting on a cloud, but rather all those mentioned here in verses 14 - 19 are angels. The Lord does not take orders from angels. The angel said to be "one like a son of man with a crown of gold" is a highly decorated angel since the verse says "then another angel" after discussing this one. "One like a son of man" means an angel who can take the form of a man, like the angels who went to Sodom in human form (Gen 19:1). Angels have various rewards for excelling in their spiritual life during the ancient angelic conflict before man was created, and this angel has a golden crown because of his past accomplishments. These verses are an overview showing how angels will administer Bowl Judgments which take vast numbers of unbelievers off the earth during the latter part of the Tribulation. The deaths are retribution for the martyrdom of believers during the Tribulation. Those who kill God's believers will die a horrible death in astounding numbers, and their entire bodies will be ground up and the resulting mush will flow like a bloody river said to be 200 miles long and five feet deep. Just as an example, that would be roughly 250 million people to make a river 50 feet wide, 5 feet deep and 200 miles long. That is what God thinks of those who kill His own believers.

The explanatory parentheses are closed (for now) and John returns to the time line discussion where he left off at the end of chapter 9 after describing the sixth Trumpet Judgment (2nd Woe).

REVELATION CHAPTER 15

Preparations for the Bowl Judgments

Now John provides details of the approaching Bowl Judgments. We have seen the natural disasters, man-made disasters, and divine judgments revealed by the Seals, including the first six Trumpet Judgments. The next two chapters discuss the seven Bowl Judgments, which occur after the Sixth Trumpet Judgment. God's patience is at an end.

Rev 15:1 “I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed.”

These seven last plagues or Bowl Judgments are executed between the 6th and 7th Trumpet Judgments. Since they are called the “last plagues” they occur very close to the end of the Tribulation. The Trumpet Judgments are executed throughout the period of the Great Tribulation, which is the last 3 ½ years, so the Bowl Judgments must fit in very near the end of that 3 ½ year period. And since the 7th Trumpet Judgment includes the Second Advent, these 7 Bowls obviously must occur before the Second Advent and in rapid succession, which will intensify their effects.

Rev 15:2 “And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.”

The scene in Heaven shows the Church Age believers as the “sea”, meaning they are in their translucent resurrection bodies, and Tribulation martyrs who are not yet in resurrection bodies standing alongside. The “fire” is the imprecatory prayers for revenge on those who killed these martyrs, which God has heard and is now prepared to answer. The “harps” here has been picked up as a regular activity in Heaven, which it is not. The harp playing is used to accompany the song of the judgments of Jesus Christ, who is about to carry out final judgments and then cleanse the earth of all unbelievers who had tormented and killed – directly or indirectly – believers during the Tribulation.

Rev 15:4 “Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

The song looks forward to the approaching Millennium during which time Jesus Christ will rule all nations from His throne in Israel. All nations will worship Him and bring Him offerings during His 1000 year reign. (Ps 66:4, Ps 86:9 Isa 2:3)

Rev 15:5 “After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law—and it was opened. Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests.”

From the true Temple in Heaven seven angels come out prepared to execute the seven Bowl Judgments. They were dressed for the occasion, showing their authority from God, a sash showing past superior achievement in the angelic conflict, and having the ability to fairly and justly carry out their mission per the instructions from the Judge.

Rev 15:7 “Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. ⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.”

A Seraph from the throne room of God handed out the seven Bowl Judgments which will be judgment on unbelievers for the evil perpetrated against God's believers, then the heavenly Temple was closed down by smoke (indicating judgment is underway) until the Bowl Judgments have been completed.

REVELATION CHAPTER 16

The Bowl Judgments Begin

It is time to execute the seven Bowl Judgments to avenge the killing of believers during the Tribulation. These judgments will be the worst seen in all of human history, and lead up to the return of Jesus Christ at the Second Advent. God does not cause misery without a good reason. These Bowls occur very late in the second half of the Tribulation between the 6th and 7th Trumpet Judgments, after God has sent many forms of evangelization to those who are about to be severely judged. The 7th Trumpet includes the Second Advent of Christ, so this shows how near the end these Bowl Judgments occur, certainly during the last year and maybe even the last few months of the Tribulation.

Rev 16:1 “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go, pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.” ² The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.”

Upon the command of the Lord the seven Bowl Judgments begin, and the first Bowl causes unbelievers on earth to break out in awful, thick, painful sores in judgment for worshiping the Beast-Antichrist and taking the mark of the Beast. This judgment harkens back to the Pharaoh of Egypt and the plague of sores in ancient Egypt. The unbelievers of the Tribulation took the mark of the Beast, and since they like marks on their skin, God gives them pockmarks all over their bodies. And the pain associated with them will be excruciating.

Rev 16:3 “The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.”

The 2nd Bowl turns all the oceans to blood and kills all remaining sea life. The rain cycle is also disrupted by this judgment since the oceans are key to rain formation. Recall that the Trumpet Judgment had previously killed 1/3 of all sea life, so this Bowl occurs later since all sea life is now killed. This shows once again the timing of the Bowl Judgments, which are very late in the Tribulation, certainly later than the 2nd Trumpet Judgment of Rev 8:8-9 which occurs during the last couple years of the Tribulation.

Rev 16:4 “The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: “You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were; ⁶ for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.”

The 3rd Bowl Judgment targets the remaining supply of drinking water. The 3rd Trumpet targeted 1/3 of all drinking water, now the remainder is taken away. Since the people on earth could not survive very long without drinking water, the Second Advent is very near. The unbelievers were bloodthirsty while killing so many believers, so God now gives them blood to drink. Believers will have special provisions during all the judgments, but the intensity of the adversities will be felt by all as God removes the most basic necessities for sustaining life from unbelievers.

Rev 16:7 “And I heard the altar respond: “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.”

Those in Heaven who have offered prayers to have the deaths of the martyrs avenged acknowledge the perfect Justice of God.

Rev 16:8 “The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹ They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.”

The 4th Trumpet Judgment had diminished the sun, and now the 4th Bowl Judgment causes the remaining daylight hours to yield scorching heat on the inhabitants of the earth as the protective layers of the atmosphere are removed.

Rev 16:10 “The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.”

The power of the Beast-Antichrist is targeted directly, and his capital and kingdom (Western nations) are turned dark. The empire of darkness now gets the darkness they deserve. The accumulation of the Bowls is taking a severe toll, with the sores, the oceans turned to blood and sea life destroyed, drinking blood instead of water, scorching heat, and now intense darkness. The unbelievers of the earth are in maximum pain and under extreme stress. But they still refuse to believe. Again we recall the Pharaoh of Egypt and his hardness of heart, whereby Moses caused darkness for 3 days as part of the 10 plagues:

Ex 10:21 “Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be felt.” ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. ²³ No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.”

This total darkness over the empire of the Beast-Antichrist occurs close to the Second Advent of Christ, and is used to delay the movement of the Beast-Antichrist's armies as they maneuver to get into position to attempt to finally destroy Israel. But this darkness will not stop the other armies moving against the Beast-Antichrist. There will also be a separate day of total darkness over the entire earth on the day the Lord returns, as we will see later.

Rev 16:12 “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. ¹³ Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”

The 6th Bowl prepares the way for Armageddon. The impediments are removed which restricted the Kings of the East from invading the Middle East and Israel, described as the Euphrates River being dried up. But that is not a literal impediment today, so it represents some unknown barrier being removed, possibly political, military, or physical. Many unbelievers will be killed as these armies from the Far East advance on the Middle East. Powerful demons (“frogs”) are sent out by Satan and his two emissaries the Beast-Antichrist and the False Prophet to stir up war emotions among the other kings and bring the whole world into one final battle. Satan simply wants everyone dead at this point, and

especially the Jews. He has lost all semblance of control. He is mad with rage and lashes out in total fury. The stage is set for Armageddon, which is the last battle of the Tribulation, and the return of Jesus Christ.

Rev 16:15 “Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.” ¹⁶ Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.”

Jesus Christ will surprise the armies of the world gathered to battle one another at Armageddon, which is in northern Israel. Some of the Beast-Antichrist's forces will also be in southern Israel and around Jerusalem trying to destroy Jewish believers there, so the Lord will also deliver the Jewish believers fighting in those areas (Dan 11:36 – ff). The believers must remain vigilant and continue to have faith in the Lord and do as they have been instructed. The Jews hiding in the high desert area of Jordan must remain there, and must not come out of their hiding places even though they will be tempted to want to help their fellow Jews fight the Beast-Antichrist. The Jewish believers in southern Israel and Jerusalem must stay and fight the invading army. Unbelievers who want salvation must believe very soon. The end of the Tribulation is only days away at this point.

Rev 16:17 “The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. ¹⁹ The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. ²¹ From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.”

After the 7th Bowl is released, the phrase “It is done!” is stated by the Lord from the throne room in Heaven. This is the final Bowl Judgment before the Second Advent of Christ. Tremendous earthquakes, huge hail, and devastating natural disasters torment the remaining unbelievers around the world. The huge hailstones kill many unbelievers, destroy their homes and other structures, and cause widespread panic. Again, believers are spared from these judgments unless they take the mark of the Beast. Jerusalem is split into three parts by an earthquake, allowing the Jewish believers in the city to flee to safety as they are fighting the armies of the Beast-Antichrist who is attacking Jerusalem (Zech 14:4-5). “No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth” describes its intensity. Babylon is completely destroyed by a combination earthquake and nuclear attack (discussed in detail later) from the Beast-Antichrist who was formerly its benefactor. Many other major cities also collapse during the massive earthquakes. Islands cease to exist from all the tsunamis and explosive volcanoes set loose by the earthquakes. Mountains are leveled worldwide. All of this sets up changes in the landscape for the Millennium, when the earth will be leveled as mountains fill in the valleys setting the stage for perfect weather. (Isa 40: 4-5; 42:15; 49:11; 54:10; 64:1) But this is getting ahead of the current context.

Immediately after this 7th Bowl occurs the 7th Trumpet Judgment will take place, and it will include Armageddon and the Second Advent. We are all excited to see what happens next, but before we are allowed see that, John goes back in time to explain the concept of Babylon. So we must understand yet another parenthesis just when we were all set to see the Lord return? Yes, but patience will definitely be rewarded.

REVELATION CHAPTER 17

Babylon the Great

The last verse of Chapter 16 has just showed how Babylon the Great will be destroyed during the 7th Bowl Judgment. The issue of Babylon is so important that the next two chapters will go into great detail about Babylon, what it is, where it came from, how it was destroyed, why it was destroyed, and other related issues. Chapter 17 is a retrospective parenthesis which takes us back to the early part of the Tribulation to see how Babylon developed.

The city called “Babylon” here (not its real name) is not the literal Babylon of ancient times. The literal ancient Babylon was completely destroyed several hundred years before John wrote Revelation, so it no longer existed except in ruins and was located in what is now central Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The name for the Tribulation city discussed in Revelation was chosen for specific reasons to describe how it will be like ancient Babylon in several ways. Ancient Babylon was the most powerful and richest city of its day, as the Tribulation Babylon will be. Ancient Babylon was the center of a degenerate religious system for a large part of the people on earth during that time, as the Tribulation Babylon will be. These two factors make the name “Babylon” the perfect choice for the name of the analogous city during the Tribulation. Early Christians called Rome Babylon, and Peter referred to Rome as Babylon in 1 Peter 5:13 “She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings”. Since Peter was in Rome when writing the epistle, this ties Rome and Babylon together as he sends greetings from Rome. But this does not necessarily imply that the satanic religious system will grow out of any current religious order or group. Although such information is not revealed, it could be that the satanic religious system throws out those who have their headquarters in Rome to take over existing location and infrastructure. The Second Advent is only 3 ½ years away at this point, so time will be short. Taking over existing infrastructure would make sense to a dictator who wants to rule the world and also believes he is a god.

The Babylon of the Tribulation describes Rome as the headquarters of Satan's worldwide religious system, and the city and religious system are thoroughly interrelated. This chapter will use the analogy of a prostitute riding on a beast to discuss both the city and the religion as if they are one entity when referring to it as either “Babylon” or the “great prostitute”. The city Rome will be a center of international trade and wealth during the Tribulation, and the seat of power for the Beast-Antichrist. So it is a place of great power – political, economic, and religious combined. All the nations of the western world look to this city as a source for their own power. The Beast-Antichrist's religious system, with himself as the deity, is a major key to his power over his 10 nation confederation. We will see in this chapter how the city will be “destroyed in one hour” by “burning”, a clear reference that a nuclear explosion will destroy this great city and all in it. It is significant that it takes three chapters of Revelation to discuss this powerful city which will be the center of such evil and degeneracy as the source of Satan's worldwide religious system. During the next several chapters we will once again see the discussion time line is not linear, but rather goes back and forth several times to provide important details.

Rev 17:1 “One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters. 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”

After John had just been shown the destruction of Babylon, an angel takes him back in time to see what led up to it. Babylon will be the focal point of Satan's international false religious system, and this religion will deceive the entire world, and will control most of the political leaders of the world by giving them their power, fulfilling their lusts, and making them wealthy. Satan is a master at providing power, money, sex, and absolution of guilt all together in the name of the common good. But it only lasts for a very short time as with Babylon.

Rev 17:3 “Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. ⁵ The name written on her forehead was a mystery: 'Babylon the great the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth'.”

This is a picture of the prostitute false religion (synonymous with Babylon the city) riding on (supported by) its State sponsor, the political power of the scarlet Beast-Antichrist, and further invoking the image of the power behind both of them, who is Satan. The satanic religious system sits on a “scarlet beast” which is the Revived Roman Empire composed of 10 nations (“horns”) which in ancient times were part of the Roman Empire. During the early part of the Tribulation the Beast-Antichrist will use false religion as a tool to gain power, and to control people on a worldwide scale. The false religion and political State will find each other useful, and their combined exploitive powers will be enhanced by their unholy union. The “blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns” shows this is the Beast-Antichrist as discussed in Daniel Chapter 11 since these attributes were all attributed to him.

But as the Tribulation proceeds, religion as the rider will end up controlling the Beast-Antichrist (“sitting on the scarlet beast”) and he will grow to despise and resent it, so Satan's own political forces will eventually destroy his religious forces as evil fights evil due to internal struggles, jealousy, and arrogance of power. The Beast-Antichrist will end up destroying “Babylon” by launching a nuclear strike on it, which will be discussed in detail later. Satan cannot control his own forces of evil or keep them from fighting each other since his plan depends on using the basest instincts of mankind, which easily get out of control and are not controllable even by Satan. The Tribulation shows that Satan is not nearly as smart or powerful as he believes he is.

The 7th angel who just executed a Bowl Judgment now explains to John how the city Babylon will be punished. The city will be the center of the evil international religious system developed by Satan with the Beast-Antichrist as its head deity, so Babylon is very much at the center of this union of the prostitute religion and the scarlet beast's 10 nation Revived Roman Empire. In ancient Rome prostitutes were required to have a banner on their forehead to identify them, and we see the name “Babylon” on this prostitute's forehead. A prostitute seduces and uses its patrons for gain, not for the spiritual benefit of those involved. The religious system is described here as a “wilderness”, therefore a wasteland devoid of truth. World rulers will be seduced into its lair to their detriment. The prostitute sits by “many waters” which are people all over the world who worship the satanic religious system. The prostitute is dressed in pseudo glamour, which is a false glamour used to lure in the unwary, which false religion does with rituals, beautiful trappings and emotionalism even though it is devoid of anything related to God. The seven heads are the past six great empires of the world as of the time of writing Revelation (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon-Chaldea, Greco-Macedonia, Media-Persia, and Rome) plus the Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation, all mixed together with religion and political

power. The 10 horns are the 10 nations of this Revived Roman Empire. This high class call girl is wealthy from taxes extracted from its suitors, and full of evil and hatred for God and His believers, so engages in murder to eliminate true believers who do not succumb to the prostitute's enticements. The great city Babylon/Rome is the capital of the Revived Roman Empire, headquarters of the Beast-Antichrist who is King of the West, and center of the worldwide false religion which will worship the Beast-Antichrist.

Rev 17:6a "I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus."

The prostitute false religion, which will become synonymous with the city Babylon led by the Beast-Antichrist, will martyr many believers, and will enjoy doing so. Jewish believers will especially be targeted. This is why Babylon will meet such a horrible end by nuclear destruction.

Rev 17:6b "When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. ⁷ Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. ⁸ The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come."

The beast on which the prostitute rides is the 10 nation Revived Roman Empire which has fostered this religion, "which was" (formerly part of ancient Roman Empire) and "now is not" (ancient Roman Empire would be destroyed) and "will come" (the future 10 nation Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation) and will go to its destruction (at Second Advent Christ destroys the Revived Roman Empire). The ancient Roman Empire would cease to exist in the 5th Century AD and will not exist again until the Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation. The 7 heads and 10 horns confirms that the Beast-Antichrist will be the Revived Roman Empire, not some other group of nations, since it is the same description used in Daniel Chapter 7 for the Beast and his empire. So the Beast-Antichrist is definitely part of the Western nations, although he may not come from Rome (or current Italy) himself. More about that issue a couple verses from now.

Rev 17:9 "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while."

The seven heads mirror the Daniel 7 description of the seven nations plus the other three which will make up the 10 nations under the Beast-Antichrist. The "five fallen" empires are Egypt, Chaldea-Babylon, Assyria, Media-Persia, Greco-Macedonia; and the one that existed at that time in 96 AD when Revelation was written is the Roman Empire, plus the one "not yet come" is the Revived Roman Empire of the Tribulation which will last "for only a little while", which will be approximately 3 ½ years. That totals seven empires. And Rome is a city of seven hills.

Rev 17:11 "The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction."

The Beast-Antichrist "once was" meaning the Caesars of ancient Rome were dictators over the same general group nations, just as the Beast-Antichrist will also rule over the same general grouping of

nations during the Tribulation. The Caesars also declared themselves to be “gods”. The phrase “is not” means it has not yet happened during the time of writing Revelation. In order to understand what this verse is saying we must look to the prophet Daniel for an explanation.

The “eighth king” shows the Beast-Antichrist was not originally part of the seven nations, but becomes part of them by conquest. This aligns with Daniel 7:8 “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was *another horn, a little one, which came up among them*; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it.” This shows the Beast-Antichrist is not part of the seven since he is an eighth king, and since he conquers the three he is not part of either the seven or the three. Also, Daniel 7:24 “The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them *another king will arise, different from the earlier ones*; he will subdue three kings.” That “another king” (Beast-Antichrist) is not described as being from among the ten nations. So the Beast-Antichrist will conquer three nations and then the other seven nations will submit to his rule. The Beast-Antichrist as the “eighth king” sets himself up as higher than any of the other seven nation leaders after first conquering three of the ten nations. Daniel 2 discusses a “mixture of iron and clay” which may refer to Rome mixed with nations outside of Rome, so the Beast-Antichrist might come from a nation not associated with the ancient Roman Empire. Also, the Beast-Antichrist is described in Dan 7:7b-8 “...It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.” So the Beast-Antichrist will originate from a country outside those ten western nations which will become the Revived Roman Empire after he consolidates them into a single entity.

Also, Daniel 2 discusses both the ancient Roman Empire and the Revived Roman Empire [interpretations added in brackets]:

Dan 2:31 “Your Majesty [King of Babylon] looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance [empires of the world]. ³² The head of the statue was made of pure gold [Babylon], its chest and arms of silver [Media-Persia], its belly and thighs of bronze [Greece], ³³ its legs of iron [ancient Roman Empire], its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay [Revived Roman Empire]. ³⁴ While you were watching, a rock [Jesus Christ] was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them [destruction of Revived Roman Empire]. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock [Jesus Christ] that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth [Millennial reign of Christ].”

The Beast-Antichrist was prophesied in Daniel 11:

Dan 11:36 “The king [Beast-Antichrist] will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath [Tribulation] is completed, for what has been determined must take place. ³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors [atheist] or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all [idolatry]. ³⁸ Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses [political power]; a god unknown to his ancestors he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He will attack the mightiest fortresses [world war] with the help of a foreign god [demon possession] and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them [10 Revived Roman Empire nations] rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.”

Rev 17:12 “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³ They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”

The future Revived Roman Empire is made up of 10 nations which are pulled together under the Beast-Antichrist during the first half of the Tribulation, and will last for “one hour”, meaning the second half of the Tribulation which will last 3 ½ years. It is shown here that the ten nations each have an existing leader and the Beast-Antichrist comes from an eleventh nation and assumes a position above the other ten. So there are a total of eleven nations involved, although we do not know what happens to the nation from which the Beast is derived. But we see that he first conquers three nations, then the remaining seven leaders must submit or be conquered, therefore he is the eleventh leader. The result is a ten nation confederation called the Revived Roman Empire. After the consolidation of the Revived Roman Empire, the Beast-Antichrist then makes war on the entire world. This final world war in history will be a result of lust for power mixed with a religious overtone borne out of the Beast-Antichrist's belief that he is a god. That is why it will be so bloody.

Rev 17:15 “Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. ¹⁶ The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.”

We see how the Beast-Antichrist eventually turns against the satanic religious system and the city Rome where it will be based, and this religious system and city are collectively called Babylon the Great. The “waters” are the masses who worship the false religion. The Beast-Antichrist grows to hate the religion even though it gave him great power, because he will grow weary of the demands placed on him by this religion. Two sides of Satan's evil will fight each other. Satan is not as smart as he believes he is, nor as powerful as he pretends to be. His satanic religious system will be destroyed by his own evil dictator. The great city Babylon will be destroyed by the very people who will build her into the richest city in the world.

Rev 17:17 “For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to hand over to the beast their royal authority, until God’s words are fulfilled. ¹⁸ The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

The ten leaders of the Western nations submit to the Beast-Antichrist because it is God's will for it to happen. They willingly submit after the Beast-Antichrist conquers three of the ten nations. The “woman” is said to be the “great city”, so Babylon (Rome) will be the center of worldwide commerce, and the nerve center for Satan's international false religion. The Beast-Antichrist will exercise his power over the economic lives of many of the people of the earth using his mark of the Beast system, and this includes Israel since the False Prophet will sell out Israel during the Tribulation. As a result, many Jewish believers will be martyred for refusing to submit to the false religion and take its mark. This martyrdom of believers is ultimately why Babylon will be so completely destroyed during the 7th Bowl Judgment as seen next.

REVELATION CHAPTER 18

Babylon Destroyed

Now that John has described Babylon and how it developed, this next Chapter describes the destruction of Babylon and its aftermath.

Rev 18:1 “After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. ² With a mighty voice he shouted: “‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!’ She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.”

The powerful angel announces the end of the city Babylon (Rome) and its satanic religious system. It was the center of false religion and government controlled commerce, tied together by the demon possessed Beast-Antichrist using his mark as a means of control over the lives of most people on the earth. Demons coordinated Satan's religious system from there, primarily through the two Beasts. Many nations worldwide shared in the degeneracy of Babylon's religious system and traded through it. In their arrogance the citizens of Babylon thought their power system and its wealth would go on forever. Now, after its nuclear destruction, only demons and mangy irradiated animals and vultures will inhabit it.

This verse points out that demons who indwell unbelievers in Babylon will lose the host they indwelt and will be isolated among the burned-out ruins of Babylon. This is like the Legion demons which indwelt the demon possessed man in Gerasene in (Matt 8: 28-34, Mark 5:1-13), when the demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the nearby herd of pigs. If not, they would have been isolated and without a host. So the demons of Babylon will be isolated after the nuclear destruction of their human hosts and wander among the irradiated ruins.

Rev 18:3 “For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”

Satan's false religion will ensnare unbelievers and captivate them with pseudo-glamour, excessive luxury, emotionalism, and lust fulfillment. World leaders will be indebted to this religion for their positions of power. This religious idolatry is a thinly disguised worship of Satan which will reach a pinnacle during the Tribulation, and is one of the main reasons for the extreme judgment which will occur at that time.

Rev 18:4 “Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “‘Come out of her, my people,’ so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; ⁵ for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.”

As the city of Babylon is about to be destroyed, God calls for believers who still live in Babylon to depart, and also for unbelievers to become believers in Jesus Christ and leave the city. God never gives up on grace, even though the inhabitants of the earth deserve nothing from Him. But that is the point. There are none who are deserving of God's grace.

Rev 18:6 “Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Pour her a

double portion from her own cup. ^{7a} Give her as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself.”

God will give Babylon judgment equal to double the pain inflicted on God's believers when they were martyred. The religious system lived in luxury but will end in ashes as payback for the murder of God's own believers in Jesus Christ.

Rev 18:7b “In her heart she boasts, ‘I sit enthroned as queen. I am not a widow; I will never mourn.’”

The people of Babylon are boastful and deluded by their arrogance. They see nothing wrong with their degeneracy. They feel invulnerable.

Rev 18:8 “Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”

A nuclear explosion will destroy the city as part of the 7th Bowl Judgment and the city will become uninhabitable due to the nuclear destruction. This is nuclear since it discusses sudden and complete destruction, consumption by fire, can be seen from far off and will occur in “one hour” as discussed in the coming verses.

Rev 18:9 “When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. ¹⁰ Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: “‘Woe! Woe to you, great city, you mighty city of Babylon! In one hour your doom has come!’ ”

It was destroyed in one hour, showing a nuclear conflagration. The nuclear destruction and burning will be seen by those in ships from far off at sea. Those who relied on Babylon for religion and trade will be horrified, and they will mourn for their own loss of economic benefit. But they still refuse to believe in Jesus Christ.

Rev 18:11 “The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore— ¹² cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; ¹³ cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and human beings sold as slaves.”

The international trade and excesses of luxury and wealth will vanish in a flash. The false economy created by this false religion will crash. Total economic depression sets in. At this point all semblance of normalcy in the Beast-Antichrist's kingdom vanishes, and all he has left is to wage war on a grand scale.

Rev 18:14 “They will say, ‘The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.’ ¹⁵ The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn ¹⁶ and cry out: “‘Woe! Woe to you, great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls! ^{17a} In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!’ ”

The people will focus on what they have lost in trade, not on what this means spiritually. Those who benefited from the mark of the Beast will now be bankrupted by it. But they will still refuse to turn to God.

Rev 18:17b “Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. ¹⁸ When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, ‘Was there ever a city like this great city?’ ¹⁹ They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: “‘Woe! Woe to you, great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin!’ ”

The destruction, mushroom cloud and smoke of burning will be visible from ships all over the Mediterranean Sea, which is more evidence of a nuclear destruction. The focus for all who see the destruction is their economic ruin, which was tied to Babylon and its religious system through the mark of the Beast. They mourn their loss of wealth, but fail to understand why this happened. This is God's judgment for killing believers who refused to accept the satanic false religion and refused to take the mark of the Beast.

Rev 18:20 “Rejoice over her, you heavens! Rejoice, you people of God! Rejoice, apostles and prophets! For God has judged her with the judgment she imposed on you.”

By contrast, in Heaven there is rejoicing that the evil city Babylon and its associated religious system have been reduced to ashes. It had murdered many believers. This is why it will be so utterly destroyed.

Now the angel brings John back down to earth, ending his vision from Heaven. The remainder of his views of future times will be from earth. The angel picks up a nearby boulder along the shore on the Greek island of Patmos where John lived and throws it into the sea to demonstrate the view from 96 AD.

Rev 18:21 “Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.”

The hurling of the boulder into the sea makes a splash much like a missile with a nuclear warhead makes a mushroom cloud. John is given multiple views of the destruction to confirm how it will happen in order to make it clear that Babylon will be destroyed by a nuclear weapon, even though John did not know what that meant. The end will be violent and total destruction.

Rev 18:22 “The music of harpists and musicians, pipers and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No worker of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. ²³ The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's important people. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.”

Babylon falls silent. No music, no tradesmen working, no grain being milled, no public utilities, no marriage or social life, no commerce or trade, no worshiping Satan, no more killing of God's believers. The deceit of Satan's religious system is ended. Only silence remains in Babylon.

Rev 18:24 “In her was found the blood of prophets and of God’s holy people, of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”

The angel tells John that this destruction of Babylon and its false religious system is an absolute certainty. The destruction will be complete and total because of the martyrdom of believers this city and its religious system will cause during the Tribulation.

REVELATION CHAPTER 19

Celebration in Heaven Over Babylon's Fall

Rev 19:1 “After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

Babylon is silent, but there is great noise from Heaven where the end of Satan's religious system, and the judgment of those who killed many believers, results in celebration.

Rev 19:3 “And again they shouted: “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”

This suggests that the mushroom cloud over Babylon will be immortalized as a monument to the victory of God over false religion.

Rev 19:4 “The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: “Amen, Hallelujah!” ⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!”

Angels in Heaven engage in celebration over Babylon's destruction, and the destruction of the false religious system Satan has used to deceive the world. We hear the voice of Jesus Christ from the throne of Heaven. The Second Advent is very near. However, the scene jumps ahead for a moment to see what will happen after the Second Advent occurs, when Jesus Christ will take His rightful place as ruler of the earth at the start of the Millennium.

Rev 19:6 “Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.' (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)”

With the destruction of Babylon and Satan's religious system by the 7th Bowl Judgment, Jesus Christ is now ready to return to earth at His Second Advent, deliver His people who are under siege, destroy the unbeliever armies massed in Israel including at Armageddon, finish the actions needed to start the Millennium, and then assume His rightful place as ruler of the earth during His 1000 year reign. But this verse jumps ahead, skipping the Second Advent for now to show John what occurs after the return of Christ has been completed. In this view, His coronation as King of the earth for the Millennial Kingdom is about to commence. The coronation banquet is like a wedding supper. His bride is the Church (all Church Age believers), which has returned with Him at the Second Advent and has been made ready to share in His rule. Church Age believers were given their eternal resurrection bodies at the Rapture of the Church, and also their eternal rewards in Heaven while the Tribulation was happening on earth. Now those who were spiritual winners during the Church Age will rule with Him. Old Testament believers and Tribulation martyrs will have received their resurrection bodies just prior to the Second Advent, and are also present at the banquet.

Rev 19:9 “Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

This is the view from Heaven looking forward to the Millennial Kingdom and rule of Jesus Christ after the Second Advent. The wedding supper goes back to the ancient world where a multi-day feast followed a wedding. The Lord and His Bride are ready to begin His rulership of the earth and there is a huge celebration feast after the Second Advent and just prior to His Millennial rule commencing. All believers of all time who have died up to that point are now in resurrection body and are invited to the feast, except for Tribulation believers who died for taking the mark of the Beast, since they are excluded from taking part in the Millennium. Also, those believers who are still alive in mortal bodies are invited. Note that no unbelievers will be there since there will be none left on the earth at the start of the Millennium.

Rev 19:10 “At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.”

John became so caught up in the moment that he started to worship the angel, but was rebuffed and told to worship only God through Jesus Christ. This will happen twice to John during these angelic reveals. What John was being shown by the angel affected him deeply, and with good reason. This was what Jesus had offered to the world during His earthly ministry, and it is what the disciples expected to happen. But the world rejected the offer of the Kingdom during the First Advent of Christ, so it was delayed. Now John is being shown how the Millennium will begin, and he will be there at this wedding banquet in the future.

Having looked ahead to the Coronation of Jesus Christ, John is about to go back to the events of the Second Advent of Christ. But first, since we are already in a parenthesis, let's take a look at how the world war of the second half of the Tribulation has set up the final battles at Armageddon and in Jerusalem, which John is about to discuss. Armageddon is what most think of when the Second Advent is discussed, but it is just one battle in the great world war waging at that time. The Old Testament provides important information about these battles. For instance, Daniel 11 reveals some of the maneuvering of the four Tribulation armies of the North, South, East, and West, which will all converge on the Middle East, and Israel in particular, to attempt to kill the Jews and fight the Lord as He returns:

Daniel 11:40 “At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him [King of the West – Beast-Antichrist] in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him [Beast-Antichrist] with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He [Beast-Antichrist is now every “he”, “him” and “his”] will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹ He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon [where Jews are in supernatural hiding] will be delivered from his hand. ⁴² He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Cushites in submission. ⁴⁴ But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain [Jerusalem]. Yet he [Beast-Antichrist] will come to his end, and no one will help him.”

The Beast-Antichrist's forces will be stationed in Israel during much of the Tribulation after he makes

an agreement with the False Prophet, who will serve as his puppet ruler over Israel. As the Tribulation proceeds, the Beast-Antichrist as King of the West will assume more control over Israel and eventually will simply seize control of most of it. He will also invade North Africa, including Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Libya, which cuts off the Suez Canal. The Beast-Antichrist actions to expand influence in the Middle East and into Africa and take control of the Suez Canal causes the other three Kings to advance on him to stop his expansion into these key regions, since they fear having their access to oil and strategic minerals from those areas cut off. This is what Joel described:

Joel 3:11 “Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, LORD! ¹² “Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat [near Jerusalem], for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. ¹³ Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!” ¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD [Second Advent] is near in the valley of decision. ¹⁵ The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine [on the day of the Second Advent].

As we see, just prior to the Second Advent there will be supernatural darkness over the entire earth. This worldwide darkness follows the darkness covering only the Beast-Antichrist's empire and military forces caused by the 5th Bowl Judgment. This is the kind of darkness which no light can penetrate. It apparently also blocks the entire electromagnetic spectrum so that military forces cannot use their radar, GPS, communications or other electronic means to maneuver and fight the Jews. This darkness is for the protection of the Jewish believers fighting in southern Israel and in Jerusalem since it will halt the advances of the Beast-Antichrist's forces.

With this overview in mind of the battles waging just prior to the return of Christ, we now return to Revelation and the vision shown to John of the Second Advent and the concluding events of the Great Tribulation.

The Second Advent of Jesus Christ

Rev 19:11 “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.”

From the earth John looks up to see a vision of the Second Advent of Christ, with Jesus Christ returning as a Warrior-King to deliver His people, eliminate the degeneracy on the earth, further avenge the killing of believers during the Tribulation, and establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth. As Jesus said in Matthew 24:

Matt 24:27 “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹ Immediately after the distress of those days “‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ ³⁰ Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven [after total darkness]. And then all the peoples [unbelievers] of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect [dead Old Testament and Tribulation believers resurrected] from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

We saw previously from Old Testament passages the Beast-Antichrist will invade Israel and seek to do Satan's bidding by attempting to destroy the Jews. God pulls the other three armies of the Kings of the North, South, and East into northern Israel to set up one final battle at Armageddon, and also to distract and frustrate the Beast-Antichrist's forces (King of the West) as they attempt to destroy all remaining Jews in Israel. The Beast-Antichrist's armies will be split among southern Israel, Jerusalem, the Israel/Jordan border, and Armageddon in northern Israel when Christ returns.

We will start with an overview of the Second Advent, and then cover the supporting verses from the Bible in detail to understand why we know these things. Jesus Christ will return to earth when Satan's four human armies are amassed in Israel, forming a battle line from the north at Armageddon, going southeast along the Jordan River Valley, and extending to Jerusalem and southern Israel. These armies are intending to destroy the Jewish believers in Israel, many of whom are trapped in their last remaining stronghold in a portion of Jerusalem. At the northernmost part of the battle line in north Israel is Armageddon (aka the Plain of Megiddo or Esdraelon; Valley of Jezreel) where the bulk of the four armies will be located. The Jewish believers fighting the Beast-Antichrist troops in Jerusalem are cut off and in danger of being annihilated, but the Lord covers the Beast-Antichrist forces with supernatural darkness for the last several days prior to the Second Advent, preventing the destruction of the Jewish believers fighting against him. This will be an impenetrable darkness where artificial lights will be of no use, so the unbeliever armies and their sophisticated weapons of war, many of which rely on using the electromagnetic spectrum such as fiber optics, microwave, GPS and other technologies, will be immobilized by it. Then the whole world will be darkened during the last day, and while it is still dark, without warning there will be blinding light and angelic trumpets, and the Lord returns to deliver His people who are in great jeopardy. Jesus Christ first comes down to southern Israel (Judah) to defend the Jewish believers there, since they are in the most danger once the supernatural darkness is lifted by the Second Advent. Then He will go to Jerusalem and literally stand on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem and split it in half with an earthquake, allowing the Jewish remnant of believers fighting in Jerusalem to escape using the newly formed valley through the middle of the Mount of Olives. As the Jewish believers are empowered by the Lord, they begin to wipe out the unbeliever armies in southern Israel, then these Jewish fighters come to the aid of those fighting in Jerusalem. The Lord also brings panic and confusion on the enemy forces, causing them to turn on each other. Once southern Israel and Jerusalem are secure, the Lord proceeds to work His way up from the south, wiping out the unbeliever armies amassed all along the Jordan border with Israel where the Jewish believers who had fled at the mid-point of the Tribulation are in hiding. Finally, He attacks the unbeliever armies of the four kings at Armageddon where they have gathered to fight each other. Upon seeing the Lord, these four armies stop fighting each other and turn instead to fight against Him. At that point they are annihilated by a word from the mouth of Jesus Christ and the world war ends, and all Tribulation Bowl and Trumpet Judgments are complete. All elect angels and resurrected believers from Heaven ride along with Him, but do not participate in the destruction. The Lord needs no help, although He allows the Jewish believers fighting in and around Jerusalem to have their victory over the unbeliever armies which had sacked Jerusalem. The end of the world war sets the stage for Jesus Christ to claim His rightful position as ruler of the earth from Satan who usurped the position at the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

As outlined above, Jesus Christ will engage in four separate battles during His Second Advent:

- 1) Southern Israel (Judah): The Lord starts by delivering the Jewish believers fighting the Beast-Antichrist forces in southern Israel outside of Jerusalem. These Jews will be in immediate peril and must be delivered first.
- 2) Jerusalem: Then He stands on the Mount of Olives just east of Jerusalem and causes an earthquake,

creating a valley through which the Jewish believers trapped in Jerusalem will escape.

3) Border with Jordan: Next He destroys the Beast-Antichrist forces along the Israel/Jordan border (Edom, Moab and Ammon) where the Jewish believers who fled Israel at mid-Tribulation will be hiding.

4) Armageddon: Finally, all remaining enemy forces of the Kings of the North, South, East, and West are annihilated by the Lord at Armageddon.

Now we will look at the passages which confirm all of the above. The information is gained from a number of sources of eschatology in the Bible which will now be covered to provide references and fill in additional details. First, Zechariah 14 covers the battle in and around Jerusalem which is ongoing when the Lord returns:

Zech 14:1 “A day of the LORD is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls. ² I will gather all the nations [Beast-Antichrist's ten nation forces] to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city [Jewish unbelievers] will go into exile, but the rest of the people [Jewish believers] will not be taken from the city [believer Jews will remain and fight]. ³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day [Second Advent] his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. ⁵ You [believer Jews in Jerusalem] will flee by my mountain valley [pathway newly formed by the earthquake], for it will extend to Azel [outside Jerusalem city limits]. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come [Second Advent], and all the holy ones with him [all believers in resurrection bodies, and all elect angels]. ⁶ On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness [supernatural darkness for preceding 3 days]. ⁷ It will be a unique day—a day known only to the LORD—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light [at the return of Christ]....¹² This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ On that day [Second Advent] people will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. They will seize each other by the hand and attack one another. ¹⁴ Judah [Jewish believers from outside Jerusalem] too will fight at Jerusalem.”

Zechariah prophesied about the Second Advent and how the very first act of the Lord will be to help the Jews fighting in southern Israel (Judah), followed by deliverance of the Jewish believers trapped in Jerusalem. As a result these Jews will become empowered to defeat the attacking army of the Beast-Antichrist during the time of the Second Advent:

Zech 9:14 “Then the LORD will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms of the south, ¹⁵ and the LORD Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones. They will drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bowl used for sprinkling the corners of the altar. ¹⁶ The LORD their God will save his people on that day.”

The Jewish believers in southern Israel will fight with extreme enthusiasm as the Lord shields them and also brings panic and confusion on the unbeliever armies. The Jewish forces are enabled by the Lord to accomplish incredible feats of daring, bravery, and skill as warriors. They will destroy the enemy outside Jerusalem, then will go do the same in Jerusalem. The Lord could do this Himself, but He

allows the Jewish believers to have their own victory over their oppressors who have killed so many of their friends and compatriots. Revenge belongs to the Lord, but He sometimes shares it for specific purposes.

Zechariah 12:1 “The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares: 2 “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. 4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the LORD. “I will keep a watchful eye over Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations [supernatural darkness]. 5 Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.’ 6 “On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. 7 “The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first [first act of the Second Advent is in southern Israel outside of Jerusalem], so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem’s inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah [those Jewish believers in southern Israel but outside Jerusalem]. 8 On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them [Jewish believers will be fierce warriors]. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.”

Isaiah 34:1 “Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! 2 The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is on all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter. 3 Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will stink; the mountains will be soaked with their blood. 4 All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll [nuclear warfare among the four Kings' armies]; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. 5 My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom [western Jordan], the people I have totally destroyed [where enemy armies are massed along the Jordan River Valley]. 6 The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood, it is covered with fat—the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom [both located along the Jordan River Valley]. 7 And the wild oxen will fall with them, the bull calves and the great bulls. Their land will be drenched with blood, and the dust will be soaked with fat. 8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion’s cause.”

Isaiah 63:1 “Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah [southeast of the Dead Sea in Jordan], with his garments stained crimson? [The Lord has annihilated the armies massed along the Jordan border with Israel] Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward [to finish the task at Armageddon] in the greatness of his strength? “It is I [Jesus Christ at Second Advent], proclaiming victory, mighty to save.” 2 Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 3 “I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. 4 It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come....6 I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground.”

Joel 3:16 The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem [during Second Advent]; the

earth and the heavens will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.”

From these Old Testament passages we can piece together the path the Lord will take during the Second Advent. There are probably at least 100 million unbelievers engaged in these battles when the Lord returns, and they will all be killed, starting with the Beast-Antichrist's forces in southern Israel (Judah) outside of Jerusalem, then those in and around Jerusalem, followed by the enemies of Israel massed along the Jordan border southeast of the Dead Sea (Bozrah), then finally the remainder at Armageddon. The Lord accomplishes most of the slaughter of the unbeliever armies, but also empowers believer Jews to fight and defeat their enemies, especially in southern Israel (Judah) and around Jerusalem.

Now back to Revelation:

Rev 19:12 “His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.”

The Second Advent of Christ is primarily viewed from the standpoint of how the Lord delivers His people, destroys the unbeliever armies and puts an end to the worldwide warfare which has continued for seven years. These are the hardened unbelievers who were able to survive all the intense judgments and disasters, yet still refused to believe in Jesus Christ. The armies are doing Satan's work, trying to kill Jews and all believers, and even all mankind. These unbelievers will be killed by the Lord as He returns to claim the earth as His rightful possession. Jesus Christ came to earth during the First Advent to deliver all mankind from slavery to sin, and as such he came as a Servant-Redeemer. If a person only looks at the First Advent they would not understand how Jesus Christ could now kill many millions of people in battle. But the roles are completely consistent. At the Second Advent He comes to deliver the earth from Satan's rule and arrives as a Warrior-King, judging the guilty and avenging the death of those believers killed by these evil people, and destroys the armies attempting to slaughter Jewish believers in Jerusalem and throughout Israel. The Millennium cannot begin until all unbelievers have been removed from the earth, so this is just the first phase of eliminating all unbelievers. We will see the removal of non-combatants as the next phase. These unbelievers have rejected intense evangelization starting with the 144,000 witnesses, then from Moses and Elijah, and finally evangelism from angels. They were not going to believe under any circumstance, and they would kill all the Jews and all believers everywhere if they could.

Rev 19:14 “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.”

The armies of Heaven include all elect angels plus most believers who have died up to this point, including Old Testament, New Testament/Church Age believers, and the Tribulation martyrs, but excludes Tribulation believers who took the mark of the Beast. The returning believers are in their eternal resurrection bodies (“white and clean”), with the Church having received their resurrection bodies seven years earlier at the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess 4:16-17; Rev 4:1) and the Old Testament and Tribulation believers having received their resurrection bodies just prior to the Second Advent (Isa 26:19-21; Dan 12:2). All the believers riding behind Jesus Christ are in their final status as eternally sanctified in resurrection bodies and each one is more powerful than any angel ever was, including Satan, yet they do no fighting. Only the Lord executes these judgments. This was the point

earlier in Revelation regarding who is qualified to open the Seals on the Book of Judgments. Only Jesus Christ has earned the right to be the Judge.

Rev 19:15 “Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Jesus Christ destroys the unbeliever armies which are doing Satan's evil work, trying to destroy Israel and all Jews, and all believers everywhere. These are truly hardened unbelievers who have killed many believers over the preceding several years. With that task complete He will then institute His rule over the earth. This verse quotes the Psalms saying “You will rule them with an iron scepter” (Psalms 2:8-9; Rev 2:26-27) meaning Jesus Christ will establish His Millennial Kingdom rule based on His own perfection, resulting in perfect law and order, and perfect justice directly from Him. Also, an analogy is made to the destruction of the evil armies as like someone who treads grapes to make wine and ends up with their clothes stained red. As Jesus Christ puts an end to the world war, He is revealed as the only true King and the only true Lord.

Rev 19:17 “And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small.”

There is about to be a great feast for the vultures. This is literal slaughter of the human unbeliever armies of Satan, resulting in an enormous number of dead. It is the first stage of removing all unbelievers from the earth. The second stage will be the Baptism of Fire, which will be discussed shortly. The Millennium will start with only believers on the earth under the rule of Jesus Christ.

Rev 19:19 “Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.”

The King of the West, also known as the Beast-Antichrist, and his False Prophet are at Armageddon, along with the Kings of the North, South, and East. They are all killed by the Lord except that the Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet are not killed, but are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire. These two become the first residents of that eternal Lake of Fire, since up until that time and through the end of the Millennium all unbelievers will have been, and will continue to be, in a temporary place often called Hell or Hades, but is more correctly called Torments. The current Hell is bad, but the eternal Lake of Fire will be worse. So the Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet will be the only residents of the Lake of Fire for the first 1000 years until all unbelievers are judged at the Great White Throne judgment and put there. And it is interesting to note that these two will be “thrown alive” into the Lake of Fire, which is more tortuous. Satan and all his demons will also be put into the Lake of Fire after the Millennium, but during the Millennium they will be held in a demon prison in middle earth called the Abyss or Tartarus. The elect angels riding with the Lord during the Second Advent will round up Satan and all demons at this point and prepare to put them into prison in the Abyss, as will be seen next.

REVELATION CHAPTER 20

Satan Imprisoned

Rev 20:1 “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³ He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.”

Michael the Archangel puts Satan into the Abyss, along with all other fallen angels. He will have waited a long time for this day, and this privilege belongs to him. Recall that many demons had been previously imprisoned in the Abyss before the creation of man for unspecified violations of God's rules during the angelic conflict, and they were released during the Tribulation and tortured and killed many people on the earth. Satan and the fallen angels will not be put into the Lake of Fire yet. They are removed from the remainder of human history except for one final revolt against God, which will occur 1000 years later and just before Satan and all fallen angels are finally put into the Lake of Fire which was prepared for them before man was even created (Matt 25:41). This makes it even more unique that the Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet will be the only residents of the Lake of Fire for the first 1000 years, since it was designed with Satan and his fallen angels in mind.

The Interim 75 Days

Earlier in Rev 12:14 we saw how the Beast-Antichrist will have 3 ½ years to do Satan's work, and this verse explains that his time will end at Armageddon. Also, the Jewish believers living in Israel who flee to the mountains when the Abomination of Desolation is set up in the Temple are said to remain in hiding for 1260 days (3 ½ years) until the Lord returns (Rev 12:6). So the 3 ½ years, which is 1260 days, of the Great Tribulation end at the Second Advent and Armageddon. At this point Jesus Christ is on earth, Satan has been defeated, and all unbeliever armies have been destroyed, but the Millennial Kingdom has not yet commenced. This brings in the issue of prophesy from the Book of Daniel which says there are another 75 days after the Second Advent before the Millennium begins. During this interim period of time several more actions must take place to fulfill all remaining prophecies before the Millennial rule of Christ can begin.

Daniel 12:11 says “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”

Recall the Abomination of Desolation is set up in the temple after the first 3 ½ years (1260 days) of the Tribulation, and this event begins the Great Tribulation, which lasts another 3 ½ years (1260 days). As we have noted, the Second Advent occurs on day 1260 of the Great Tribulation. But Daniel 12:11-12 quoted above discusses another 75 days broken down into 30 days plus 45 days (1260 vs. 1290 vs. 1335 days). First, we know from Daniel that it is “blessed” to reach the 1335 days, which means those who reach that point are believers who will go into the Millennium and then live another 1000 years in perfect environment, and will not grow old. Truly a blessing. This also implies some will not reach the 1,335 days, namely unbelievers who are still alive on the earth after the Second Advent. The Lord kills the unbeliever armies during the Second Advent on day 1260, but not all unbelievers on the earth, so

there is still work left to do after the Second Advent. The 1335 days issue shows the Millennium begins on Second Advent + 75 days, which is day 1335. It also answers the question regarding why Matthew 24:22 says: "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." The answer is that the Second Advent occurs 1260 days after the Great Tribulation begins so believers, especially Jews in Jerusalem, can be delivered, otherwise they would all be killed. Therefore the Second Advent occurs after 1260 days, so the Lord does not delay until either the 1290 or 1335 days discussed by Daniel to return to earth and deliver the Jews in Israel from the invading armies, but rather cuts short the timing of Armageddon to 1260 days. Then the Millennium begins on day 1335.

Regarding the 75 days remaining after the Second Advent but before the Millennium begins, made up of a 30 day period plus a 45 day period, there are five actions which will take place during these 75 days:

1) During the initial 30 day interim period Satan and all demons are removed from the earth, confining them in the demon prison called the Abyss (Tartarus) during the Millennium. This removal was described in Rev 20:1. Satan has lost his rulership over the earth and will be imprisoned for 1000 years and all fallen angels along with him.

2) The second action during the initial 30 day interim period will remove all remaining gentile unbelievers from the earth. They must be removed before the Millennium can start, since no unbelievers are allowed to go into the Millennial Kingdom. This is called the Baptism of Fire where all remaining gentile unbelievers are removed and placed into Hell (Matt 24: 39-41; 25:1-46).

3) The third action takes the full 75 days. The Lord will regather all Jews to Himself from all corners of the earth. This is a miraculous regathering of Israel and has nothing to do with having a Jewish nation in the Middle East at any given time. After regathering all Jews they will first be sorted into believers and unbelievers while still outside of the boundaries of Israel. Jewish unbelievers will then be removed from the earth and only believers, both Jews and gentiles, remain to go into the Millennium. Ezekiel 20 says:

Ez 20:34 "I will bring you [all Jews] from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered—with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. ³⁵ I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations [outside of Israel – maybe Arabian Peninsula where the Jews wandered 40 years] and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you. ³⁶ As I judged your ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt [before they were allowed to enter the Promised Land], so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD. ³⁷ I will take note of you [sorting process] as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. ³⁸ I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me [unbelievers]. Although I will bring them [all Jews] out of the land where they are living, yet they [unbeliever Jews] will not enter the land of Israel. Then you [believer Jews] will know that I am the LORD [and enter the Millennium Kingdom]."

4) The fourth action which takes place during the 75 days is the resurfacing and reorientation of the earth in preparation for perfect environment. The earth will be healed by the Lord of the disasters of the Tribulation. The billions of dead bodies will be buried. The earth's tilt will be eliminated so the seasons will end. The mountains will be lowered and valleys raised up, making the earth fairly flat with only rolling hills. Both of these allow for a uniform temperature throughout the earth so that all land areas will support abundant agriculture and all will have plenty of food. The exception to the flattening of the earth's surface will be the raising up of Jerusalem to be the highest point on earth.

5) The fifth action which takes place during the 75 days is the construction of the Millennial temple, where the throne room of Jesus Christ will be located. It will be needed immediately when the Millennium begins so Christ will have a throne room. The temple will be built as specified in Ezekiel Chapters 40 – 43 which provides a precise blueprint for the Millennial temple. The Lord Himself will assemble the temple in the short period of time between Armageddon and the start of the Millennium. Zechariah 6:12-13 says the Lord will build the Millennial temple: ““Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. ¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne.” This is why the temple can be built in such a short time during the interim 75 day period, because the building will be miraculous. When Jerusalem is raised up to be the highest point on earth, the new temple will be in place at the summit, built by the Lord Himself.

After these events take place the Wedding Supper of the Lamb described in Rev 19:9 occurs celebrating the beginning of the reign of Jesus Christ.

During the 75 day period of time between the completion of the Second Advent and the start of the Millennium these five actions will take place, preparing the earth for the start of the Millennial Kingdom. But the worst period of human history is complete after the Second Advent occurs. Then the 75 days of administrative actions close out the Age of Israel in preparation for the Millennium to begin. As we noted earlier, human history is about future times, not about end times, even though intense judgment is part of the future times. The period of great judgments on earth is over, and now human history moves into 1000 years of perfect environment using the same earth which had been battered during the Tribulation. God judges, but His grace prevails.

The Millennium

Rev 20:4 “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” ⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

These three verses mention the Millennium and are the only ones in Revelation which describe it except for Satan's final revolt which is covered later. The brevity is due to the vast amount of information already provided about the Millennium in the Old Testament. Seen here on the thrones are a mix of Old Testament and Church Age believers who were spiritual winners during their lives on earth. In the Millennium the Church as the Bride of Christ has primary rulership positions over the nations, while Old Testament believers from the Age of Israel have leadership positions primarily in Israel. The “souls of those who had been beheaded” are believers who were martyred during the Tribulation and receive special blessings because of the difficulty of what they did and what they had to endure, having been believers for such a short time before their martyrdom. Note the method of martyrdom during the Tribulation will be by beheading – a Roman custom by which the Apostle Paul was executed by the ancient Romans. It is used throughout history when a nation needs to dispense with large numbers of “enemies of the state”, so the Beast-Antichrist will reinstitute this Roman tradition during the Tribulation to get rid of large numbers of believers in Jesus Christ. These martyrs

from the Tribulation will serve the Lord as priests during His Millennial reign. But believers who take the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation to enable their economic survival are referred to as “the rest of the dead” since they are saved, but disobeyed God's warning against taking the mark. These disobedient believers will remain in Heaven without being resurrected until the Millennium is over, and will not be allowed into the Millennial Kingdom. They will be the only believers remaining in Heaven during the 1000 years, since all other believers who die before the Millennium will be in resurrection bodies on earth ruling with the Lord.

The First Resurrection is for all believers of all time. Resurrection is when the believer receives an eternal body like that of Jesus Christ (Phil 3:21-22), which is an eternal resurrection body far superior to any angel's body. The Second Resurrection, also called the Second Death, is for all unbelievers of all time. This judgment of unbelievers occurs as a single event after the Millennium when Jesus Christ personally judges each unbeliever at the Great White Throne Judgment and puts each of them into the Lake of Fire. Until that time they are in the temporary Hell (Torments).

The earth undergoes significant changes during the destructive judgments of the Tribulation, as mountains will fall, islands will explode and vanish, and so on. The current earth will continue during the Millennium but will be changed. But how can there be perfect environment on the earth after so much destruction has scarred the earth during the Tribulation? Jesus Christ will heal the earth when He institutes perfect environment, so the destruction which occurs during the Tribulation will be overcome by His transformations. But although it will be changed, it will still be the same earth. It still has 1000 years of usefulness left in it at that point.

As noted earlier, the Old Testament has quite a lot to say about the Millennium and provides many more details than seen here in Revelation, so it is necessary to spend some time covering those passages to understand this unique period of time. As an overview, it is “the Kingdom” which Old Testament prophets and the disciples spoke of thousands of years ago. Jesus Christ will rule the earth for a literal 1000 years, and His throne will be in Jerusalem in an expanded nation of Israel. There will be perfect environment, with many changes to the earth itself and to nature. Satan and his demons will no longer be able to tempt mankind since they will be in prison. There will be no war and minimal crime, and death will be very rare as people's bodies will no longer wear out with age, and there will be no diseases. Human history will start and end with perfect environment, starting with the Garden of Eden, and ending with the perfect environment of the Millennium.

There are several purposes for the Millennium in God's plan. One of the main purposes is to show that perfect environment is not the solution to man's sinful nature or problems. The only answer is salvation through Jesus Christ and living the spiritual life God provides for us, no matter the environment or other conditions. During the Millennium people will still have the same sinful nature as all who came before them, and perfect environment will not make them any better as people. They will still be sinners with plenty of personal problems and many will reject Jesus Christ as Savior even though He is on earth with them. There will be millions of unbelievers on earth by the end of the Millennium, and they will join with Satan during his final revolt. This shows how faith in Christ and learning God's Word to enable living the spiritual life will still be the only true solution, both eternally and temporally.

Another primary purpose of the Millennium is to fulfill the promises God made to the Jews in Old Testament times. The Millennial Kingdom was what the disciples expected Jesus Christ to institute when He started His ministry on earth during His First Advent. That is why they continually discussed

“the Kingdom”, referring to the Millennium. They initially did not understand that Christ's salvation work for mankind had to occur first, and only truly understood this issue after the crucifixion had occurred. Jesus made a legitimate offer of the Kingdom (Millennium) during His First Advent, but since He was rejected as the King of the Jews during that time the Millennium was delayed. Into this delay the Church Age was inserted, splitting the Jewish Age into two parts, the Old Testament period from Abraham to just after the Cross, and then the Tribulation which completes the Jewish Age. Of course this was God's Plan all along knowing the rejection of Christ would occur. This insertion of the Church Age happened seven years before the Jewish Age was prophesied to end (Daniel 9:24-27), which is why the Tribulation is necessary to complete the last seven years of the Jewish Age. As discussed earlier, it is why the Church cannot remain on earth during the Tribulation and must be removed before it begins, since the Church is not part of the Jewish Age which will be completed during the Tribulation. Once the Tribulation completes the Jewish Age the final Age called the Millennium can begin.

The Millennium is a regathering and restoration of Israel with Jesus Christ established as the King of Israel under a Theocracy (rule by God). The Jews had rejected the previous Theocracy rule when they demanded a human king like other nations, and Saul became king of Israel against the will of God (1 Samuel 8:6-8). But God promised that Abraham's descendants would own a very large portion of the Middle East, an area much larger than has ever been known as Israel, and the Messiah as a descendant of David would be King over Israel. God also established a New Covenant to Israel which will be fulfilled in the Millennium:

Jeremiah 31:33 “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.””

Ezekiel 39 provides a good summary of the Millennium as related to the regathering of Israel:

Ez 39:25 “Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. ²⁶ They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. ²⁷ When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations. ²⁸ Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. ²⁹ I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

The Jews will have lived “in exile” scattered among the various nations for thousands of years until the Millennium begins. The existence of a nation called Israel today has nothing to do with the supernatural regathering of every single Jew (as Ezekiel said “not leaving any behind”) into a nation ruled by Jesus Christ Himself during the Millennium. There are many more Jews scattered today than living in the current nation of Israel. And simply being Jewish without having believed in Jesus Christ as Savior has no standing with God.

During the Millennium the remainder of the earth will be populated with gentile nations, also ruled by

Jesus Christ from Jerusalem. We have seen how believers from Old Testament times, the Church Age, and the Tribulation who had previously died will return in their eternal resurrection bodies with Christ at the Second Advent. These believers in their resurrection bodies will come to earth with Christ and remain to serve Him during the Millennium as rulers of cities and nations, judges, priests and to serve the King of kings in many other leadership positions. So on the earth will be the Lord Himself, believers in resurrection bodies who had previously lived on the earth, believers in natural bodies who survived the Tribulation, and people who will be born during the Millennium. There will even be angels (elect only) living on the earth who will be visible at that time. Needless to say, it will be an unusual time.

Genesis 13:14 “The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

Genesis 15:18 “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

Genesis 17:7 “I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

The land which will belong to Israel during the Millennium will be much larger than the current size of Israel as a fulfillment of these promises to Abraham.

The Millennium will also fulfill the promises to David that his descendant (Jesus Christ as the Son of David) would rule forever beginning in the Millennium and during the Eternal State.

2 Samuel 7:6 “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”

Psalms 89:3 “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ⁴ ‘I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.’”

Isaiah discusses how Jerusalem will be the most important city during the Millennium, since the Lord will rule over the entire earth from there:

Isa 2:2 “In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. ³ Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

Zech 14:10 “The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the

Arabah [a low flat plain]. But Jerusalem will be raised up high [Jerusalem will become a much higher plateau] from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses, and will remain in its place. ¹¹ It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure [safe during the entire Millennium].”

Jerusalem will be “raised up high” from its current height while the countryside all around it, which is currently quite hilly, shall be made level like the Arabah, a low plain. Present day Jerusalem is about 2500 feet above sea level, and some hills around it are higher. These elevation changes will make the approach to the city on a high mountain where Christ rules a spectacular sight for those who approach His city.

Isa 40:4 “Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.”

We see that Jerusalem will be the highest point on the earth as “the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains.” The earth will be much flatter, as the Tribulation earthquakes caused the mountains to fall into the valleys. The remaining elevated areas are now called “hills” by Isaiah, with none as high as Jerusalem. Recall the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem, which is currently higher than the city, will be split in half by the Lord at the Second Advent and will become much shorter. According to Ezekiel 48 the size of the Millennial Jerusalem will be approximately seven miles square. The Lord will rule from Jerusalem, so the city will be elevated physically, spiritually, and in importance in the eyes of all the Lord’s subjects throughout the entire earth.

Ezekiel chapters 40 – 43 provide a detailed blueprint for the Millennium temple, which will be built before the start of the Millennium by the Lord Himself. The Tribulation temple will be destroyed by the earthquake which splits the Mount of Olives during the Second Advent of Christ. The new Millennial temple will be the throne of Jesus Christ:

Ezekiel 43:6 “While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. ⁷ He said: “Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever.”

Offerings at the Millennium temple will be in memory of the salvation sacrifice of Jesus Christ, not looking forward to the sacrifice of Christ as with the Old Testament sacrifices. The Millennium will be a time of universal peace on the earth:

Isa 2:4 “He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

There will be no more war, but there will be plenty of disputes among people and nations since mankind remains sinful and therefore no better than during any other period of time. There would be war except that the Lord will not allow it. He will rule with an iron scepter, so it will not simply be everyone getting along just fine without firm leadership. Jesus Christ will strongly enforce the rule of law. As such there will be no war, and almost no crime.

The Prophet Micah echoes the statements of Isaiah:

Micah 4:1 “In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains [no mountain on earth higher than Jerusalem]; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. ² Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³ He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. ⁴ Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.”

Believers who are in their eternal resurrection bodies during the Millennium will be on the earth as rulers of the nations, and will serve in other positions of leadership in the Lord's rulership hierarchy such as governors, judges and administrators. Jewish believers will generally have leadership over Israel, and gentile believers will generally have leadership over gentile nations, but that may not be a firm distinction. The disciples who became apostles to the Church (plus Paul), who were all Jews, will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel:

Matthew 19:28 “Jesus said to them [disciples], “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Luke 22:29 “And I confer on you [disciples] a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom [Millennium] and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

1 Cor 6:2 “Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels?”

David will be a “Prince”. Resurrected gentile believers who were spiritual winners during their previous time on earth will rule generally throughout the rest of the earth. Tribulation martyrs will be the priests as will be noted in Rev 20:4. It is interesting to think about how there will be many millions of believers on earth who are in their eternal resurrection bodies, having previously lived out their lives during an earlier Age of time.

Isa 11:3 “He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.”

We see that there are quite a few references to judging among people during the Millennium. In the very, very rare case where a capital crime is committed, the Lord Himself will judge and execute the person very quickly with perfect fairness. We often think of perfect environment as solving the world's problems, but the Millennium will prove this to be wrong. Only the strong rule of the Lord will enable this perfect environment among imperfect humans.

Isa 11:6 “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the

lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

The curse put on the earth after the fall of Adam will be lifted. Both animal and plant life will be friendly to mankind. There will be no wild animals, and they will not eat each other. There will be no more thorns or dangerous plants. Nature will become very tame, and the earth will be fruitful and will easily give up its bounty.

Micah 4:4 "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken."

There will be no hunger and very minimal crime during the Millennium.

Zechariah 3:10 "Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the LORD. ¹¹ "Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. ¹² The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem."

Jesus Christ will cause Israel to be the preeminent nation during the Millennium and will rule from Jerusalem. Other nations will look to Israel as the most favored of nations. The Lord will be present among the people and those who are believers will have the benefit of knowing Him as their resurrected Savior while they are still on the earth.

Zechariah 14:8 "On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter [Second Advent earthquake forms a new valley]. ⁹ The LORD will be king over the whole earth [Millennium]. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name."

Ezekiel 47:1 "The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar....⁸ He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. ⁹ Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. ¹⁰ Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets."

Splitting the Mount of Olives creates a new river flowing both east and west from Jerusalem. It will flow east to the Mediterranean Sea, and west to the Dead Sea and on to the Red Sea. The resulting waterways will make Jerusalem a major seaport, connecting Jerusalem to both the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean creating a significant new trade route for international commerce. Jerusalem will become the most important and prosperous city on earth during the Millennium, and a center of commerce as well as the world's capital city. Although the Dead Sea water currently does not support life since it is 34% salinity, the water flow from the temple mount into the Dead Sea freshens it during the Millennium, and will turn southern Israel into a paradise of great beauty and bounty for farming

and will create great fishing and provide other pleasure purposes. We also see that although all the fish of the oceans and seas were killed during the Tribulation, the fish are back in abundance in the Millennium as a result of the Lord healing the earth.

Zechariah 14:16 “Then the survivors [believers from gentile nations] from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year [during the Millennium] to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. ¹⁸ If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. ²⁰ On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. ²¹ Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite [idolaters] in the house of the LORD Almighty.”

This passage is instructive in showing how after the initial believers begin the Millennium, many of their descendants born during the Millennium will not become believers. Some of those will not want to pay their respects to honor the Lord's deliverance of His people. Even in perfect environment, the Lord can and will withhold blessings to those who refuse to obey Him. But obedient unbelievers will benefit materially and have many blessings in the perfect environment of the Millennium as long as they otherwise obey the Lord's laws and policies.

There are also some interesting miscellaneous facts about the Millennium. David will be the Chief Prince ruling alongside Jesus Christ. He will have his own section of Jerusalem allotted to him. David will be the only one allowed to eat in the presence of the Lord inside the temple. Ezekiel 44:3 “The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the LORD.” This reminds of when King David and his men were very hungry and ate the bread from the tabernacle which had been presented as an offering to the Lord, something generally forbidden. 1 Sam 21:3 “So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.”

In summary of what the Millennium will be like, it is the Kingdom which Christ will rule for 1000 years, with His throne located in Jerusalem. It will be a time of perfect environment on the earth. All Jews will be regathered into a much larger nation of Israel. Jerusalem will be raised up as a mountain higher than any other on earth. We see that after the Tribulation the Lord will heal the earth since it will be in terrible shape. The destruction which occurred will be repaired, and the earth will also be changed such as the flattening of mountains, few islands and so forth. Satan and fallen angels will not be on the earth to try to influence man and world events. Humans in resurrection bodies will be on the earth as rulers over the humans who are living out their natural lives. Elect angels will also live on the earth. Plant life will be restored and also tamed. Animals will no longer be wild or eat each other. The seas and sea life will be restored and will thrive. The sun and moon, afflicted during the Tribulation, will be made whole again. Barren land and deserts will bloom. The earth will be very friendly to mankind and will easily provide much bounty. But humans will still be as they have always been since the fall of Adam, sinful and no better than ever, and in need of salvation through Jesus Christ and needing spiritual understanding to solve their individual problems.

Now back to Revelation which turns to the end of the Millennium and what follows.

The Final Revolt of Satan

Rev 20:7 “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Satan never gives up trying. One final act of the long-running Angelic Conflict is allowed for Satan after the Millennium has been completed. This revolt is technically not part of the Millennium since Satan cannot be on the earth during the Millennium. Note the verse says “When the thousand years are over”, showing the Millennium has ended before Satan is released from the Abyss and allowed to stage this final revolt. Satan is released for his sentence to the Lake of Fire to be carried out, but he attempts one more revolution, stirring up human unbelievers to revolt against perfect environment under the perfect Ruler Jesus Christ. Note that it says Satan is released, not the rest of the fallen angels, meaning the others remain in the Abyss during this last revolt. This final revolt is allowed by God to demonstrate that even perfect environment does not make people happy and solve their problems since they are still sinful, and this is especially true of unbelievers who will be plentiful at that time. Many of those born during the Millennium will reject Jesus Christ as Savior, so Satan finds large numbers of human unbelievers on earth when he is released from the Abyss after 1000 years of imprisonment. These human unbelievers succumb to Satan's last desperate deception and join his final revolution, forming an army called Gog and Magog, which refers to this army marching out of the north when they attack Israel and Jerusalem where Jesus Christ reigns. Satan does what he always does, stirring up anti-Semitism among the gentile unbelievers on the earth, so that they march on Jerusalem to try to destroy it and the Jews. Since there are no weapons during the Millennium, Satan induces the unbelievers to produce some, but those in Israel will have none. The armies of Satan, numbering probably in the millions, then march toward Jerusalem ready to destroy it.

As the satanic armies of Gog and Magog are approaching Jerusalem, Jesus Christ declares the revolt over, and instantly consumes all the unbeliever armies with fire from Heaven. Ez 38:22 “I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.” Then the Lord seizes Satan in preparation for carrying out the judgment sentence determined before man was ever created. Once this final point has been demonstrated in the angelic conflict, that ancient battle is over, and Satan is declared to be the eternal loser. Satan and all fallen angels are finally thrown into the Lake of Fire forever, a fate Satan desperately fought to avoid for many thousands of years resulting in enormous misery for mankind over its entire history from Adam until this final revolt at the end of the Millennium.

The Apostle Paul wrote of this day:

1 Cor 15:24 “Then the end will come, when he [Jesus Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power [Satan and fallen angels]. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet [Satan and demons defeated and in the Lake of Fire].

God allowed Satan to battle with Him for many thousands of years to give Satan the opportunity to try to prove his assertion that God was unfair to sentence him to the Lake of Fire. The final report card on Satan's attempt will show that God was proven perfectly fair and loving, while Satan was proven to be an evil loser. And Satan dared to presume he could be "like the Most High God." Instead he will end up like the lowliest unbeliever sharing the same eternal punishment with no special status in a place of horrific pain and deep darkness, forever. In eternity, all in the Lake of Fire are in the same type of lowly eternal body, with Satan and fallen angels no more significant than any human unbeliever.

This Gog and Magog revolt is covered by the entirety of Ezekiel 38. To clarify an issue which has confounded many, the Ezekiel 38 war is separate from the war described in the following chapter Ezekiel 39, so it is not a continued discussion of the same war. We previously noted the Ezekiel 39 war occurs at the beginning of the Tribulation, and must be so because the Jews will use the weapons of war remaining after that battle for fuel for seven years, which is the remainder of the Tribulation. But Ezekiel 38 is not part of the Ezekiel 39 war, but rather refers to the final satanic revolt at the end of the Millennium as discussed here in Rev 20:7. These two battles are separated by 1007 years, rather than being a single war. The post-Millennium satanic revolt discussed in Ez 38:11 says: "You [Satan and unbelievers] will say, 'I will invade a land [Israel] of unwallled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars [Millennium safety].¹² I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people [Jews] gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land [Jerusalem in the center of Israel].'" Since these Jews will be living without walls, and have been regathered from the nations, this must be a Millennial reference, and can only be the final revolt of Satan since it is the only war "during" the Millennium (technically after it ends). Ezekiel 39 happens during the Tribulation, and Ezekiel 38 happens at the end of the Millennium, so the order is the reverse of the historical time line. This is not so unusual since the prophets did not necessarily know what time period they were prophesying about. They, like everyone else, were only given the details God wanted them to know, not everything they wanted to know. The prophet Daniel is an example of this: Dan 12:8 "I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, 'My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?'"⁹ He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end....¹³ "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

After the final revolt of Satan is crushed, human history on earth is complete, and all remaining Millennial unbelievers are removed from the earth. Then the Great White Throne Judgment will occur whereby all unbelievers of all time will be brought out of Hell (Torments) along with the two Beasts from the Lake of Fire, and all human unbelievers will be judged by the Lord Himself.

Also at this time all Millennial believers will receive their resurrection bodies, and also the disgraced Tribulational believers who took the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation will receive their resurrection bodies, so that all believers of all time will finally be in their eternal bodies immediately after the Millennium ends. All believers then assemble in Heaven, but not for long. God has something else in store for His believers during the Eternal State. But first, we see that all unbelievers will be judged by the Lord Himself.

The Judgment of the Dead

Rev 20:11 "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens

fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.”

After the Millennium ends human history is complete, and all unbelievers from all time are taken out of Hell and assembled in Heaven for judgment. The earth and universe (heavens) are now empty of mankind and angels, and since they are no longer needed they are destroyed. This is a literal and complete destruction whereby the very elements of the entire universe including all atoms are unzipped in a single flash and cease to exist forever. 2 Peter 3:10 says: “The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.” The earth, every star, every planet, every atom will vanish in an instant. History is complete, and the final remaining action is to judge all unbelievers of all time, then the Eternal State can commence for all believers.

Rev 20:12 “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

All unbelievers of all time are judged individually and personally by Jesus Christ. They refused to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and accept His salvation work on the cross, and instead they relied on their own “good works” during human history for salvation. But every unbeliever is found to have come short of achieving the required perfect righteousness necessary to live with God, since perfect righteousness is only available through faith in Jesus Christ. Only through faith in Jesus Christ the Savior can man be redeemed from sin. Every unbeliever is therefore guilty of imperfection and thrown into the eternal Lake of Fire alongside Satan and his demons. They will all be equal. Satan will not rule in the Lake of Fire, but will be just like the most insignificant unbeliever there – he is nobody special, and is tortured forever just like all the human unbelievers.

If anyone thinks God can allow imperfection to live with Him, and ignore the only Savior and the only way of salvation God allows, this passage puts to rest that thought. Jesus Christ suffered unimaginably to provide salvation, and it was the only way possible for God to allow humans to have a relationship with Him. Jesus said: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) Terrible as the Last Judgment is, the majority of all humans and 1/3 of all angels ever created will reside there forever. Forever.

REVELATION CHAPTER 21

The Eternal State – New Heavens, New Earth & New Jerusalem

Rev 21:1 “Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.”

After the current earth and universe are destroyed at the end of human history, eternity for believers will not be spent in the current Heaven but rather in a new universe and on a new earth. The new earth and universe are prepared to accommodate the powerful resurrection bodies of believers, which will be superior to the current bodies of angels. Jesus Christ said our bodies would be just like His (Phil 3: 20-21). These bodies will be capable of instantaneous space travel, so the entire new universe will be available for the pleasure of believers for all eternity. We will not need sleep. We will eat for pleasure but won't need food for sustenance. There will be no need for a sun or moon since God's glory will be the source of all light. There will be no need for rain, so no oceans or seas will be on the new earth to drive a rain cycle. Whatever we can conceive it will be like, we will come up way short. More details about the Eternal State will be provided throughout this chapter.

Rev 21:2 “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.”

The New Jerusalem, something like a cube satellite 1400 miles square (roughly the size of the current earth's moon) will hover over the new earth. The throne-room of the Trinity, the true Holy of Holies in Heaven, will be transferred from Heaven into this new eternal city, so that God will live among His believers (and elect angels) forever. The New Jerusalem will also be the dwelling place for the “spiritual winners” of all time – the Old Testament, Church Age, Tribulation, and Millennial believers who fulfilled their spiritual life while on earth – these are the believers who will live in the New Jerusalem with Jesus Christ. The rest of the believers who did not fulfill their spiritual lives while on earth (most believers) will live on the new earth and possibly elsewhere in the new universe. Since Jesus Christ will reside in the New Jerusalem, that is where every believer will want to reside, but only those who excelled in their spiritual life during human history will reside there. This is the most significant difference among believers during all eternity, their individual access to the Lord, which will be the most highly prized issue for all eternity.

Rev 21: 4 ““He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Note that believers in eternity are promised an end to unhappiness, and therefore are promised happiness, but they are not promised perfect happiness or equality. This verse focuses on the “negatives” being removed, not on the level of happiness since that will be an individual issue. There will be degrees of eternal blessing based on how well each believer lived their spiritual life while on earth, so there will not be equality of status or happiness. Since all believers will be in eternal resurrection bodies with no sinful nature, and will be in a place without any “negatives”, their eternal life is one of basic happiness. But those spiritual winner believers who reside with Christ in the New Jerusalem will have rewards exceeding all other believers of all time, including greater access to the

Lord and the Father, among other fantastic blessings. Those who live on the new earth below the New Jerusalem will have happiness, but less status and fewer levels of rewards, and will not have nearly the access to the Lord. Once again we see various levels of rewards for believers based on their spiritual life during human history. Everyone will have basic happiness since all the “negatives” that caused unhappiness on earth will be gone, but some will have more happiness, greater access to the Lord, more status as rulers, crowns and special clothing showing spiritual achievements during their life, and other currently unimaginable rewards than those who did not fulfill their spiritual life while on earth. The Bible mentions that rewards will include crowns, rulership, a better residence (New Jerusalem), greater access to the Lord, a better “uniform” with decorations, shining brightly (Dan 12:3), and other types of undefined benefits: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived — the things God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Cor 2:9) There will be hierarchy and structure, and the Lord “shall reign forever and ever” with believers having places in that structure based on their spiritual life while on earth. Overall the single most important difference will be the level of access each individual believer has to the Lord throughout eternity, and this will be the ultimate reward separator defined by living either with the Lord in the New Jerusalem or on the new earth with less access to the Lord.

Jesus Christ speaks directly to John at this point. Until now mostly angels have communicated with him.

Rev 21:5 “He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

“Making everything new” means a new earth, a New Jerusalem, a new universe, eternal resurrection bodies for believers which will be more splendid and powerful than any angel. Whatever happened during human history is forgotten except for the spiritual achievements of each believer. All the rest is gone. Any bad things that happened to believers on earth will have vanished forever – wiped away.

The Bible says Jesus Christ will rule forever and ever. He will first rule on the current earth during the 1000 year Millennium, and after the current earth and universe are destroyed He will continue to rule for all eternity in the new heavens and new earth from His throne in the New Jerusalem with the entire Trinity residing there.

Rev 21:6 “He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.”

Jesus Christ declares that after the Millennium is complete, human history is “done”, and so also the angelic conflict is “done”. He is the beginning and end, and all believers of all time are with Him forever in the Eternal State, even though they have various levels of rewards and status. The purpose of creating mankind and putting them on the earth during human history was to resolve the angelic conflict and prove to Satan that God was Just, Righteous and Fair to condemn Satan and all fallen angels to the Lake of Fire forever, and that such actions did not violate His perfect Love. Human history will have proved God's grace to man who was offered salvation by a simple act of faith in Jesus Christ which gives the “water of life” Jesus offered to all during His time on earth. John 4: 14: “Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Satan chose against God, but during the course of human history many humans choose for God through Jesus Christ, and the various Ages of time during human history will have proven from many different aspects how wrong Satan was. Now that the angelic conflict has been settled, Jesus Christ declares

both it and human history “done”. And with it, Satan is also “done”.

Rev 21:7 “Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.”

All believers of all time, regardless of spiritual victory or failure to fulfill their spiritual life while on earth, will be included in the new Eternal State described here. But this verse emphasizes how the “victorious” spiritual winners during their time on earth will inherit special blessings, status, and greater personal access to Jesus Christ. Of course, anyone who is a believer will be very glad to be there, and very grateful to the Lord for what He did to enable it. And the Lord will love them all as His children.

Rev 21:8 “But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

All unbelievers of all time will end up in the Lake of Fire forever. They are described here by examples of some sins which generally distract most unbelievers from seeking salvation, not that these listed sins are necessarily the worst of all. Jesus Christ died for every sin any person ever commits during human history, making salvation by faith in Christ available to all. But many refuse to believe in Him and seek their own way in life, often being distracted by the sins listed here and will therefore spend eternity apart from God. This “second death” has no end since they rejected Jesus Christ the only Savior and therefore do not have the perfect righteousness necessary for a relationship with God. The Lake of Fire is described as burning sulfur, a picture of intense torment. Although one might think this fiery place would have light, it is absolute darkness since all light in eternity is only from God's glory and through Jesus Christ, and only for His own people.

The Lord says He will wipe away the old things from human history, and all will be perfect in His presence forever. He personally declares this to be the truth. Believers will inherit great blessing for all eternity. Unbelievers will be sent into the Lake of Fire forever, which is the second death. There is nothing in between, and there will be no crossing over. It is all “done” as the Lord says in this passage.

The New Jerusalem

Rev 21:9 “One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”

John is shown a vision of the New Jerusalem which will be part of the Eternal State forever. This city will be the new throne-room of Jesus Christ and will hover over the new earth as previously described. It is called “the Holy City” because Heaven will be transferred into it, including the throne room of Jesus Christ. We see here the New Jerusalem “coming down out of Heaven”, showing the transfer of the throne room of God into it since Jesus Christ will rule from there. And the entire Trinity will reside in it instead of in the existing Heaven. Recall the current earth and universe as we now know them will be destroyed at the end of human history, so everything here is new – new earth, new universe, and a new eternal city. The New Jerusalem is said to be analogous to a bride since its description is as something desirable and of great beauty. So this is not a reference to the Church as the Bride of Christ,

but rather describes the appearance of the New Jerusalem which will be beautiful like a bride is to her husband on the wedding day.

Rev 21:11 “It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

The New Jerusalem is described in terms we can relate to now, but is not actually made from these current jewels and precious stones. The entire city is made of translucent materials not currently known, and they shine as they reflect the glory of Jesus Christ, the only source of light for all eternity. The walls have 12 gates reminding of the 12 tribes of Israel. The city walls have 12 foundation stones reminding of the 12 apostles to the Church. So the gates remind of Israel and the foundation reminds of the Church. This ties Israel and the Church together, two major components of God's plan for history although during human history they were always kept separate. As noted, this city is where spiritual winners from human history will reside with Jesus Christ during eternity, and everyone else will reside on the new earth below. Those residing in the New Jerusalem will be in the hierarchy of rulership over the earth below supporting the reign of the Lord.

Rev 21:15 “The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶ The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick.”

The New Jerusalem is a cube, nearly 1400 miles long, wide, and high. That would be the right size to roughly hover above the lands promised to Abraham in Gen 15:18-21. These lands will belong to the Jews during the Millennium, but in the Eternal State the old earth will be gone, so the New Jerusalem is the replacement promised to Abraham (Heb 11:8-10) and also for all spiritual winners of all time. The city has walls nearly 1400 miles high and over 200 feet thick.

Rev 21:18 “The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.”

It is the New Jerusalem – not Heaven -- which has the features often referred to as “streets paved with gold” and “pearly gates”, but even these references are not quite accurate. The entire city is made of a gold-like translucent material including the streets, and the walls are like pure continuous diamond. The foundations of the walls are decorated as described here with all sorts of translucent precious stones not currently known, but a variety something like those listed, providing great beauty. The 12 gates are each an entire entity like a giant pearl in appearance. The overall appearance is one of translucent shining beauty which reflects the glory of Jesus Christ and provides pleasure to those who see it, both humans in resurrection bodies and angels. We see here that God will provide pleasure for His believers in every way possible, including visual beauty throughout the New Jerusalem, new heavens and new earth.

Rev 21:22 “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”

Jesus Christ will reside with His believers and angels during the Eternal State, so there is no need for a temple building to represent Him to us. The temple buildings for Israel always represented Jesus Christ and showed aspects of His salvation sacrifice for us (brazen altar), his God-Man status (gold overlaying wood on temple furniture), the Holy of Holies representing Jesus Christ in Heaven, and so forth. The New Jerusalem is the eternal Holy of Holies represented first in the Tabernacle from the time of Moses until Solomon, and then in various temples of Jerusalem on the current earth, from Solomon's temple to the Millennial temple, since the New Jerusalem is the dwelling place of the Lord forever. Also, God's glory through Jesus Christ will be the source of all light in the Eternal State, so there is no need for a sun or moon. And the new heavens (universe) will be full of destination planets to visit for pleasure, and resurrection bodies will be capable of traveling through space instantly.

Rev 21:24 “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

While spiritual winner believers will reside in the New Jerusalem with Jesus Christ, the remainder (most believers) will reside on the new earth, which of course will be very nice indeed, just not as desirable as the New Jerusalem. This new earth will have organization structure something like our current nations, and will be ruled by those who live in the New Jerusalem, so the view of eternity which has no structure or organization is not accurate. Those who reside on the new earth will periodically bring offerings to Jesus Christ in the New Jerusalem, which will be one of the rare times they can visit the city and see Jesus Christ. This provides additional details about one of the major differences in eternity for believers based on how well they accomplished their spiritual life while on earth, namely that access to the New Jerusalem and therefore to Jesus Christ will be limited for those believers who ignored their spiritual life during human history. Note here “The nations will walk by its light” meaning the New Jerusalem is the replacement for the sun and moon, as the light from Jesus Christ shines from the New Jerusalem onto the new earth. This verse says “there will be no night there” in the New Jerusalem, but does not specify whether there will be no night on the new earth below. We are also reminded in this verse that all unbelievers will be in the Lake of Fire forever so can never enter the New Jerusalem or be anywhere else in the Eternal State with God, and also that they will be in darkness apart from God's light. Once the person's life has ended, whether believer or unbeliever, their status for all eternity is locked in forever.

To expand on what has been covered in this chapter it is worth noting that most ideas people currently have about eternity are wrong. All who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior will be in this new eternal state regardless of their spiritual life after salvation. But believers will not turn into angels. We will not play harps while sitting on clouds. We will not all be equal. But we will all have a resurrection body like Jesus Christ has right now. There will be rank and order and structure and variations in status, with spiritual winner believers having much more of everything than those who failed to fulfill their spiritual life while on earth. Before this Eternal State begins all believers who have died will reside temporarily in Heaven, then during the Millennium most will be on the earth in their eternal bodies in various levels of leadership positions based again on how well they fulfilled their spiritual

life. But after human history is complete the current universe will be destroyed, and all believers during the Eternal State will live in a new heavens (universe) and new earth with a New Jerusalem hovering above the new earth. Spiritual winner believers will reside in the New Jerusalem with Jesus Christ, while all other believers will only be allowed occasional visits and will live on the new earth. We will be able to travel throughout the new universe and explore and use it for our pleasure. This is what eternity for believers will actually be like, although this is only a tiny glimpse of what God has in store for all of us who believed in Jesus Christ while living on earth. We see from this chapter that God has something wonderful and exciting for believers in the Eternal State, and we will never be unhappy, bored, or otherwise uncomfortable. But there will be differences in levels of happiness based on how well we fulfilled our spiritual lives while believers on earth.

John continues the discussion of the New Jerusalem in the final chapter.

REVELATION CHAPTER 22

Inside the New Jerusalem

Rev 22:1 “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

The New Jerusalem will be the new throne-room of God and Jesus Christ, having been moved from the current Heaven into the New Jerusalem during the Eternal State. The Trinity will actually “reside” in the New Jerusalem during the Eternal State. The satellite city will have the original Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden, which is currently being guarded by angels until it is moved during eternity. Gen 3: 24 says: “After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.” A “river of the water of life” is described as flowing down the middle of the main street, with the Tree of Life on either side, possibly rooted on both sides and arching over and connected as a single tree. This shows how the New Jerusalem will be a reinstitution of the Garden of Eden in many ways. The Tree of Life will bear a different fruit each month, yielding twelve different fruit crops. Note there will be a twelve month calendar during eternity since humans orient to time, and also shows once again how eternity is a place of order and organization. We will eat and drink, but only for pleasure. We will not need to eat for sustenance or to maintain our status since that is locked in forever. The River of the Water of Life and the Tree of Life remind us that God will never allow anyone to lose their status for all eternity, and that during eternity we cannot do anything to lose what God has given us as a result of faith in Jesus Christ while we were on earth. It is noted that the fruit is for those who reside in the New Jerusalem, but the leaves will go to the nations on the new earth below for the “health of the nations” (not “healing”). The fruit vs. leaves shows yet another difference among believers in eternity based on various levels of reward status, as eating the fruit is better than having the leaves, whether as tea or otherwise.

Rev 22:3 “No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

Again this shows the Throne-room of God the Father and Jesus Christ will be relocated from the current Heaven into the New Jerusalem. It is assumed that since the New Jerusalem comes down out of Heaven itself, and the Throne-room of Heaven as it now exists will be moved into the New Jerusalem forever, perhaps all of current Heaven is moved into the New Jerusalem and no longer used, but that is not specifically stated. The Trinity will dwell with believers forever inside this new universe, and the spiritual winners who reside in the New Jerusalem will have supporting roles for the rule of Jesus Christ and will have rulership positions over the structure on the new earth below. Again we see a structured Eternal State to support the eternal worship of Jesus Christ the Savior and the entire Trinity. And structure is also important for the happiness of mankind even in eternity.

The new earth will not be cursed like the old earth prior to the Millennium, whereby man struggled on the old earth through the “sweat of the brow”. As Gen 3: 17 says: “To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of

your life.” This curse is not applied to the new earth. Light will fill the New Jerusalem and new earth, and that light is directly from God. But those who reside in the Lake of Fire will be in eternal darkness without any light since there is nothing of God there, and light is only from God.

Rev 22:6 “The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

The angel speaks again to John, assuring him that all these things are true and will certainly happen. This begins the summation of the book of Revelation. All prophecy we need to understand has now been revealed. We have been told what we need to know, and what we were not told we do not need to know while on earth. At this point the Church is again addressed, something which has not occurred during the prophecy section of Revelation since the Rapture was shown in Rev 4:1. Once again we see how Revelation makes it clear the Church cannot be included during any part of the Tribulation.

Encouragement to the Church

Rev 22:7 “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

Jesus Christ now issues a proclamation to John. Revelation chapters 4 - 21 provided information for both Church Age and Tribulation believers, but it is primarily addressed to the Church even though we will not be on earth when the prophetic events concerning the Tribulation unfold. Jesus Christ says here the Rapture of the Church is “imminent”, meaning there is no prophecy to be fulfilled before the Rapture occurs, therefore it is the next prophetic event in history. All other currently unfulfilled prophecy given in Revelation or elsewhere in the Bible will be fulfilled after the Church has left the earth. The Church needed Revelation to understand how human history will play out so we can live by faith knowing it is all in God's hands.

Rev 22:8 “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!”

For a second time John became so caught up in the moment that he started to worship the angel providing the message, but was again rebuffed as in Rev 19:10 when he did the same thing to another angel. The information was so overwhelming that John wanted to express his appreciation, although it was misdirected.

Angels are servants of the Lord just as human believers, and are not in the hierarchy between us and God. They are currently in more powerful bodies since they are in their eternal status, just as we will be after our resurrection. But we human believers will actually be physically superior to angels in our eternal bodies since we will have a body just like that of Jesus Christ. As a side issue, angels have the same souls we have, they just have different bodies. Even Satan has the same soul as humans, just in a much more capable body, both mentally and physically, since he was created as a Cherub angel.

During eternity all fallen angels and human unbelievers will be put into eternal bodies of condemnation, and they will all be equal; even Satan will be no better off than any human unbeliever in the Lake of Fire. As noted earlier, Satan does not rule Hell, but rather will simply be one more tortured soul in a lowly body in the most awful place imaginable in misery for all eternity. There is equality of

suffering in the Lake of Fire, and it is forever.

Rev 22:10 “Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near.”

The angel provides his final instructions, that this book of Revelation must be studied and followed, not held back or hidden. This shows it is part of Scripture, and it is the final piece. The message to us is heed the words, follow its instructions, don't be turned aside, but stay true to the Word of God which Revelation now completes.

There are many prophecies to be fulfilled during the future times. Out of all the prophesies in the book of Revelation, and from other New Testament books, as well as from the Old Testament about events which must occur, God will not allow a single one to go unfulfilled. Matt 5:18 says: “For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” Revelation is not an allegory about the future. The prophecies contained in it are as factual as any historical event, and therefore are certain to occur.

Rev 22:11 “Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”

We believers are told to “live and let live”. Many will not believe in Jesus Christ, and many believers will ignore the Scripture. We evangelize and we help other believers, but everyone must make their own choice and live with the consequences forever. Life and eternity are about choices. Believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and spend eternity with God, or refuse and spend eternity apart from God. There will also be major differences in eternity among believers based on the choices made during their lives on earth, especially regarding how well they complied with the information provided in these Scriptures.

Rev 22:12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

Jesus Christ now speaks to John and issues His final instructions and commands. He will return at any time the Church is complete and take it to Heaven, which means we must heed the Scriptures we have been given as if the Rapture is about to occur any day. His statement “I will give to each person according to what they have done” emphasizes the differences in eternity, and compared to the short time we are on earth all must choose wisely since they are locking in their eternal status, not just as believer or unbeliever, but also regarding the level of rewards among believers during the Eternal State.

Rev 22:14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

Those who “wash their robes” are spiritual winners who excel in their spiritual life and will be in higher levels of rewards during eternity, including living in the New Jerusalem and having access to its superior blessings. All believers will live forever with God, but some will live in the New Jerusalem where the throne room of Jesus Christ and Tree of Life and River of Life are located, and some will

only be allowed to enter occasionally on special occasions. Unbelievers, referred to here by certain identifying sins, will never be allowed into the Eternal State, since they will be in eternal darkness in the Lake of Fire and will have no access to God at any time during eternity.

Rev 22:16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

The angels gave information to John, who must provide the information contained in Revelation to the churches during John's day and make it available for all churches afterward, and also for Tribulation believers. Jesus Christ cites His credentials to issue these commands as eternal God, the One spoken of by the prophets of old (Morning Star), and the Messiah descended from David as prophesied by Isaiah.

Rev 22:17 “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.”

Salvation is free to anyone who will simply accept it, and so is the spiritual life after salvation. The Holy Spirit and the Church (Bride) work together to spread the invitation, which is continually open while the unbeliever still lives, and ends at the point of physical death. This passage urges all unbelievers to accept the free gift of eternal life. But many are hardened in their souls like those during the Tribulation, most of whom will refuse to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Rev 22:18 “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.”

The final instructions of this Book are from Jesus Christ, saying this finishes the Word of God in the form of the Bible; do not alter it either by additions or deletions. Jesus Christ will evaluate the spiritual deeds of all believers and will reward or not reward as is Just and Righteous. This verse says “God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City” showing once again how full access to the New Jerusalem will be limited to spiritual winners. This will limit access to the throne-room of Jesus Christ, the Tree of Life, the River of Life and many other eternal blessings to those who excel in their spiritual life while on earth. Once we become believers we remain on earth to fulfill the spiritual life God has directed in the Word of God. We must learn from it and live by it if we want to have full access and the highest level of rewards during the Eternal State.

Rev 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

The Lord confirms the Rapture is the next prophetic event in human history. The angels respond to the words of the Lord, affirming their belief. But even the angels do not know the timing of the events prophesied in Revelation. The Rapture will set in motion the future times including the Tribulation, the Millennium, and finally the Eternal State, but no one can know when that initiating event will occur. The angels declare they are ready to do their part whenever the Lord is ready.

Recall how this booklet started, and it is worth repeating as it finishes. The book of Revelation was provided as part of the Bible so Church Age and Tribulation believers can understand God's plan for history, know that it is under His control, and live by faith trusting God. History will not play out in some random and uncontrolled way resulting in the earth and all mankind being destroyed. God has

told us through His Word how history will conclude so we can rest in the knowledge that His plan will unfold exactly as He has preordained. God may not have told us all we want to know, but He has told us all we need to know.

Rev 22:21 “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.”

The last sentence of the last book of the Bible is a personal message from John, the last living Apostle. The visions are over, and he is back in his normal state of consciousness. John emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the God-Man providing salvation by grace to all who believe in Him, and those who believe are therefore God’s people. The final word is “Amen”, which means “It is truth”. The Word of God is true and worthy of believing.

THERE IS NO END

APPENDIX: Timeline of the Future Times

Rapture of the Church:

The Rapture (Resurrection) is the next Prophetic Event in History

All Church Age believers (living and dead) are removed to Heaven by resurrection; Jesus Christ comes into the atmosphere but not to earth so it is not an “advent” of Christ

The Tribulation begins with only unbelievers remaining on the earth

(Rapture is NOT part of the Tribulation; Tribulation begins after the Church is removed)

Tribulation

First 3 ½ years: Early Tribulation

Tribulation Begins With:

- Church Age believers gone, their bodies missing, people wonder what happened, motivates evangelization especially among Jews as their blindness toward Christ is lifted by the Rapture
- 144,000 Jews immediately believe in Jesus Christ then become evangelists set apart to evangelize the world
- Issues which start early and continue throughout the entire Tribulation (Tribulation historical trends):
 - Seals 1 – 4: The Four Horsemen: Dictatorship, War, Economic Disaster, Death
 - Ezekiel 39 war occurs early (not Ezekiel 38, which is Satan's revolt at the end of the Millennium)
 - Seal 5: Martyrdom of believers
 - Seal 6: Earthquakes, volcanoes, tidal waves, giant meteors

Other events during the first 3 ½ years:

- Revived Roman Empire (10 nation confederation) consolidated under Beast-Antichrist: 3 nations defeated, 7 capitulate; Beast-Antichrist becomes the dictator as King of the West
- Revived Roman Empire makes alliance with Israel
- Temple in Jerusalem becomes operational and sacrifices begin again
- Overall there is increased war, economic downturn, numerous disasters and disruptions; times are bad and life is tough but generally bearable during first 3 ½ years; Relative prosperity exists in Israel

Second 3 ½ Years: The Great Tribulation

Immediately begins with:

- Abomination of Desolation idol put in Jerusalem temple / Jewish believers in Israel flee to Jordan mountains
- Satan and all fallen angels cast out of Heaven; demons now allowed to torture and eventually kill humans
- Beast-Antichrist and False Prophet revealed (the two Beasts); Beast-Antichrist is worshiped as a god
- Two Evangelists – Moses and Elijah revived from death and appear in Jerusalem spreading the gospel

Seal 7 (Trumpet and Bowl Judgments):

Shortly after start of The Great Tribulation, Seal 7 is opened and the Trumpet Judgments begin:

Trumpet 1 – 1/3 of all vegetation destroyed, and 100% of all grasses destroyed
 Trumpet 2 – 1/3 of sea life destroyed, plus 1/3 of all ships
 Trumpet 3 – 1/3 of fresh water polluted/destroyed
 Trumpet 4 – sunlight diminished by 1/3, moon and star light diminished by 1/3
 Trumpet 5/Woe #1 – demon attack #1 on humans
 Trumpet 6/Woe #2 – demon attack #2 on humans
 Near end of Tribulation (probably last year of Tribulation), the Bowl Judgments occur:
 Bowl 1 – sores cover bodies of unbelievers
 Bowl 2 – sea water completely destroyed – all remaining sea life dies
 Bowl 3 – drinking water destroyed
 Bowl 4 – sun scorches people and earth
 Bowl 5 – darkness becomes pervasive on earth
 Bowl 6 – Euphrates River dries up allowing Kings of the East to invade Middle East
 Bowl 7 – Devastating earthquakes and hail; Babylon destroyed by nuclear weapon
 At very end of the Great Tribulation:
 Trumpet 7 / Woe #3 – Second Advent, Jesus Christ destroys unbeliever armies including at Armageddon

Judgments end with Jesus Christ on earth, but Millennium does not start for 75 days

Interim Period – Extra 75 Days (Daniel's “1335 days” reference compared to the 1260 days):

After seven years the Tribulation judgments end, but Millennium does not yet begin due to remaining actions required. This is what the “days will be shortened” means, rather than shortening the 7 years, the judgments will end early (by 75 days). Revelation lays out the exact number of days the Great Tribulation will last. The time of the worst judgments will be shortened rather than the overall Tribulation time line.

Tribulation over, interim period of 75 days before start of Millennium to complete remaining prophecies

- Satan and fallen angels imprisoned in the Abyss during the Millennium
- All remaining gentile unbelievers removed from earth and into Hell (Baptism of Fire)
- All Jews regathered to Israel; unbeliever Jews sorted out from among believers and removed from earth

At this point only believers remain on the earth to start the Millennium

Millennium:

- Coronation Supper of the Lamb – Jesus Christ becomes Ruler of the earth as King of Israel
- Curse of Adam removed from earth; perfect environment instituted and earth healed from the Tribulation
- Nations formed with resurrected believers leading nations, governments and courts
- Millennium Temple built (Tribulation temple destroyed by earthquake)
- People live extended lives without disease, death is rare, no war, those very rare crimes are harshly dealt with, no hunger or poverty, people work but wealth is easily attained, many still refuse to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, man is no better than ever in perfect environment under the perfect rule of

Jesus Christ

After 1000 years (after the Millennium is completed):

- Satan and fallen angels released from prison in the Abyss
- Human unbelievers (millions) join with Satan to revolt against Jesus Christ and attempt to overthrow Him, marching on Jerusalem in a huge army (Ezekiel 38 war – Gog and Magog revolt)
- Jesus Christ destroys entire satanic army with fire from Heaven, revolt crushed (Ezekiel 38:22)
- Salvation opportunity ends, all unbelievers removed from earth and put into Hell
- All Millennial believers removed alive from earth by resurrection, and all remaining dead believers are resurrected (some residual from the Tribulation and the few who died during the Millennium)
- Satan and fallen angels put into Lake of Fire; Angelic Conflict ends
- Human history is complete.

After Human History Ends (Period Between Millennium and Eternal State):

- All believers are in Heaven (temporarily)
- Earth and universe are now empty and are completely destroyed
- Great White Throne Judgment in Heaven of all unbelievers of all time – then all unbelievers are put into Lake of Fire where Satan and all fallen angels had already been placed

Eternal State:

- Creation of new heavens and new earth
- New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven and hovers over new earth, transferring God's throne room into this eternal city where the Trinity reside forever among all believers
- Believers of all time placed into new heavens and new earth structure; spiritual winner believers live in New Jerusalem and the remainder live on the new earth; various levels of rewards for believers based on the spiritual life while alive
- Jesus Christ and the entire Trinity live in the new universe with all believers forever.